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THE
WRECKER'S DAUGHTER.

A ROMANCE OF THE BARNEGAT BEACH.

BY MRS. ORRIN JAMES,

AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING DIME NOVELS:

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BY MRS. OLNEY JAMES
AUTHOR OF THE FLOWING DARK NOVELS
AND THE BROWN TOWERS
FOR THE PEOPLE.

NEW YORK:
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THE WRECKER'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE NIGHT WATCH.

It was a night in the winter of 1855, wild and stormy, dark and cold—so wild and stormy that the inhabitants of the city shuddered inside of their warm dwellings. How pitiless, then, must have been that night on the sea! the great, boiling, roaring ocean, which rolled its black billows under the black sky, but a few miles from all these peaceful lighted homes, whose dwellers, few of them, thought of the tragedies being enacted a little way off.

In a mansion on one of the up-town avenues of New York city a gentleman was pacing earnestly up and down the length of the library floor, ill at ease, for to him the storm had meaning. Just as he was leaving his warehouse late that afternoon a message came from the pilot-station that the clipper ship *Flying Cloud* had been sighted off Barnegat beach laboring heavily to stand off the coast—that treacherous coast upon whose sands so many a ship had stranded, and every yard of whose wide stretch of beach had received the bodies of drowned men, women and children. All day long the cold north-easter had blown, steadily increasing in strength, until, as night came on, the earth fairly shook under its shocks. There were voices in the air which were not moans but shrieks, as if the demons of the unseen world were holding wild riot—such voices as always made ship-owners thoughtful and sailors anxious.

Off Barnegat!

No wonder the merchant paced his floor restlessly. Not only did he own half of the superb clipper—whose fame as a fast sailor was world-wide—but the whole of her cargo was

the consignment of his East India agents, whose advices, by overland mail had informed him that it was one of the richest freights the vessel ever had borne. There was, of course, an insurance upon both vessel and cargo; but that never would more than half compensate for their loss, while the profits on the "rising" market, which were to have made him rich, would, if lost, leave him in an embarrassed position.

No wonder it was impossible for the merchant to calm himself. He had scarcely tasted of the elaborate dinner which had awaited him on his coming home; and now there was no topic in the evening papers of sufficient interest to hold his attention.

His young daughter, a girl of fourteen, came in to kiss him "good-night," and as she wound her arms about his neck, said,

"How the wind blows, father dear. I am almost afraid to go to bed; I wish I had my mother to-night," and she burst into tears, with a mingled feeling of grief and desolation, produced by the memory of her two-years dead mother and the wildness of the hour.

"There, my little Katie, don't cry! It's a terrible storm; but *you* do not suffer. Think of the poor seamen, and pray for them, before you go to your own warm bed. Pray for the safety of the *Flying Cloud*, daughter, for she is in peril, this night. If you like, you can ask your maid to sit with you until you fall asleep."

"I will pray for others, father, and then, perhaps, I shall not think so much about myself," was the girl's sweet answer.

Hardly had the slender figure, with its scarlet merino dress and golden hair, vanished from the room, before the door-bell rang sharply and a servant brought in a telegram, announcing from the underwriters that the *Flying Cloud* was beached near Squall Inlet, down on the Jersey coast. She had gone on, just after sundown, and the wreckers had immediately given warning to the agent, who was already at the scene of the disaster.

"Too bad! too bad! Her cargo will be worth very little, after the water gets to it. What luck! and at this time, too, when I depended so much on the profits of the trip. I trust no lives will be lost," was the merchant's second thought, for

he was not altogether selfish, and remembered the poor sailors as well as the rich freight. "It is too late to attempt getting out there to-night; nothing can be done in the darkness; but I must leave this house at daylight," and he resumed his walk, as if his mind would not allow his body a minute's rest.

"Merciful Father! only hear that!" he ejaculated presently, as the wild wind drove the rattling sleet more fiercely against the window. "This storm will run hours yet, and every one of those poor fellows will perish of cold, if nothing else, unless they were taken off before dark. Ah, those that go out upon the sea are ever in peril. Bless my soul!" he suddenly exclaimed, "how strange that I have just thought of it! My own anxieties quite drove poor Gifford out of my mind. It is altogether likely, from the tenor of his last letter, that his son is aboard the *Flying Cloud*. If so, Heaven help him, where man is powerless. If he should be lost, it would be a fatal blow to his father, I fear."

As he passed his desk the gentleman turned and took from a pigeon-hole a packet of late letters, not yet filed, and selecting one from the number, paused under the chandelier to give it a fresh reading, almost hoping that its contents would be less decisive than he remembered them to be. It ran thus:

"CEYLON, October 8, 1854.

"FRIEND WETMORE: Your beautiful ship has arrived and excites universal admiration. Your orders have been filled, I think it will prove, to your satisfaction. The crop is excellent this year, and prices low. Inclosed find invoices, for which you may remit the usual time drafts.

"And now to speak of a little matter not connected with business. I trust the old friendship is still warm enough to interest you in my affairs, to the extent of making you willing to do me a great favor. My boy, Oliver, is seventeen years of age—almost a young man. He has good business talents and habits, and is doing well enough under my eyes; but he has cherished the wish to visit his native land, of which he hears so much from me—who am still a true American, though I wear silk trowsers and ride elephants—until it has become a passion. Nothing satisfies him. 'I want to see New York,' is his constant appeal. I some months ago resolved that I would not only gratify his wish, but that it would be best for him to spend three or four years in America. I wish him to be placed in one of your best schools for two years, as, although he has always had a tutor, the warmth and indolence of this climate and people

unfits for that severe application which characterized our studies, friend Wetmore, in those merry days of the past.

"After the two years I would desire him to be placed in some good mercantile house, where business is done in the old-fashioned way, *i. e.*, with integrity and on a solid foundation. Of course I should esteem it fortunate if that house could be your own; but do not ask it unless you need and would take such a person. That you will feel an interest in my motherless boy, taking occasional account of his progress, his health, manners, etc., and give him the benefit of fatherly advice—is that asking too much, old friend?

"It is very hard for me to give him up for so long a time, the only child my Anna ever bore me; but since it is for his good, I must forget myself. I tell you in advance that he has some wayward streaks running through his general good behavior; but it is only wilfulness, not wickedness. How is the little Katie of whom you have written me? A child yet, I suppose. Give her a kiss from an old brown beau in Ceylon.

"The visit of the *Flying Cloud* was opportune. She is such an elegant ship, so new and staunch, with so fine a crew, and sailing so direct for America, it gives me the chance for which I have been looking to get Oliver off. He is wild with excitement. Since he came, when he was a little fellow in frocks, he has never taken a long sea-voyage. He is ignorant of life outside Ceylon. I imagine he will have many things to learn, and some curious things to unlearn. But my letter is getting long for a man who has forgotten all the sentiment of his college days, and only uses a pen to sign invoices and columns of figures.

"As in the days of old lang syne,

"Ever yours,

"O. GIFFORD."

It certainly was not conducive to Mr. Wetmore's peace of mind to think of the only son of his friend being on the *Flying Cloud* that night. He and Gifford had loved the same Anna in the days of their early youth, and Gifford had won her, only to lose her after a brief and happy union, and to be so afflicted by his loss as to go abroad to look after the interests of his father's foreign partnership, never to return to a country full of such sweet and bitter memories. He was a prosy old widower, now, eating curry and drinking Madeira, and making money out of the brown-skinned natives; but Wetmore always remembered him, as he was in the days of his youth, a graceful, witty, affectionate man, whom Anna did well to love. As for himself, he had found another Anna,

loved and married her, and lived happily with her many years; and she, too, was now gone.

There was a warm place in the merchant's heart for the expected guest; he was sadly troubled at the state of affairs this stormy night. What if his own Katie had been out on the ocean, or in the doomed ship? He made the danger his own, when he thought of the boy, forgetting the China silks, the Thibet cashmeres, the precious spices, and the costly vessel.

"I feel that I can not wait until morning," he said, to the colored servant, who came in to hear if he had any orders.

"Oh, Massa Wetmore, what could you do? You would catch your def of cold, ridin' out in dis sleet. An' you wouldn't get dar no quicker, after all."

"Well, I don't know that I would. Have a cup of coffee for me, at the first ray of daybreak, for I shall be off as early as possible."

For many hours the merchant wandered restlessly about the house, sitting down only to rise again with every fresh burst of the tempest. He dozed an hour or two on the library lounge, dreaming of elephants and Anna, of drowning, of the five-story brown stone wholesale house on Murray street, tossed about and going to pieces, stone by stone and brick by brick, on an icy ocean.

Finally, by a gray pallor which crept in at the shutters, he knew it must be morning; but there was no gleam of sunlight—the wind still beat mightily from the north-east, hurling the keen sleet through the dim dawn.

CHAPTER II.

THE JOLLY JACK AND THE SIGNAL GUN.

ALL day, of the day preceding the wild night of which we have spoken, that fierce north-easter had blown the tossed and torn waters of the Atlantic on to the low, gray sands of the Jersey shore. Great, glassy, green walls were continually

being built up, further and further in, to shiver into a thousand fragments the moment after.

The hardy wreckers crept out of their huts, attired in their storm-suits, heedless of the sleety blast and of the icy spray which dashed over them, anxiously watching the turbulent sea, whose dull gray line mingled with the dull gray sky, until heaven and earth appeared rolling and heaving together. It was an awful storm!—yet such is the force of habit, and the selfishness of human nature, that many of these rough people, swarming out of their miserable cottages, rejoiced in it, as they would have rejoiced in summer at the prospect of a heavy haul of mackerel. It was dull, waiting week after week for the profit and excitement of a wreck. If these weather-beaten fellows, in their tarry jackets, with the odor of fish and tobacco hovering about them as naturally as sweetness about roses, had been in the habit of saying their prayers, they would pray for a wreck as piously as for fish—it would have been another form of asking for their daily bread.

Sometime in the afternoon, out of a queer little hut on the beach, near Squall Inlet, came two persons. It would have puzzled an observer to say whether this human habitation belonged most to the land or water; it was a queer, amphibious sort of house, equally at home on either, or at least looked so. Built of the stranded fragments of many a goodly ship, there stood at the bow, or front door, the faded and paint-worn figure of an admiral of the olden time, in cocked hat, pigtail and ruffles, but so buffeted by the winds and waves of fortune, that his very nose was battered in, and his once florid cheeks gray with wooden troubles. A mast, cut away in time of peril from some luckless vessel, was nailed to the rear, and from its head fluttered ever, in sunshine or storm, a ragged bit of the stripes and stars. “The Jolly Jack” her owner had named his land-craft, whose nautical air was very much envied by many of his neighbors.

Out of this “Jolly” affair, into the beating tempest, came a man and a girl. The former was, perhaps, sixty years of age, but still as unshaken in his strength as a rock. A pair of long-legged boots were drawn over his trowsers, and two or three layers of woolen jacket encrusted him. He was prepared for a skirmish with the elements.

"Now you better go back, Tangee; this wind'll nip the hair right straight out o' yer head. The cabin o' the Jolly Jack's the properest place for a gal on a day like this."

The wind and the water roared so as almost to drown his rough voice; but the tones which answered him chimed in and through the storm, clear and high.

"I should smother in there to-day, daddy. It's so nice out here, I wouldn't stay back for any thing."

"But you'll freeze up solid, like a water-cask."

"Then I'll thaw myself out. No more talkin', daddy; I like to be out as well as you. And if any thing *should* happen, you know I'm a good hand to pick up, and I've got sharp eyes."

"Yes, yes, Tangee, you've got an eye like a captain's glass. You can see as fur as a telescope. Come along! come along! I never did see sich a gal in my born days."

She ran by his side, and they went down closer to the sea, until they came to a bit of rock which stood up out of the sand. This was their point look-out, and on this they clambered.

"Do you think there'll be wrecks to-day, daddy?"

"If thar are any vessels this side of the Gulf stream they'll have a tough time to keep off the sands, I reckon. Nothin' but steam could head or quarter this storm comin' from the nor'-east's very nose. Look sharp, Tangee; do you make out any thing off to the north—thar, just beyond that spit, follerin' it out with yer eye."

A fresh blast tore the girl's old hood from her head, but she paid no attention to its loss. So slender, so frail, as she stood there, you would have thought a breeze would have swayed her! Yet the little form did not quail. Her wet frock flapped against her limbs, and her long black hair flew out like a banner; but her cheeks grew redder with the kiss of the cold sleet, and her eyes shone like diamonds with the intensity of life awakened in her by this sight of the warring elements of which she seemed a part.

She might have been fourteen, not large, but looking fully her age, with a skin as brown as it was smooth, and hair and eyes of the intensest blackness. If the mermaids had thrown her ashore, after stealing her from some southern island, her

complexion, features and figure might be accounted for, and, perhaps, her wild, untamable nature also.

There was not one shade of resemblance between her and the man she called "daddy," except in their mutual love for the tempest. Never came there a storm too wild for either of them. You *might* drown a duck, and you might drown Tangee, but it would take a good deal of water, or some very singular accident, to accomplish it.

"Well, what do you make it out?"

"A ship, daddy, drivin' down before the blast—all sails gone or reefed, the riggin' flyin' loose. She's headed this way!"

"I'm sorry for the ship, gal; but ef she's got to come ashore, I hope she will make it convenient to beach near the Jolly Jack."

"Oh, daddy, I hope they'll be able to keep her off, for we couldn't do any thing to help her, with the water like that. The wind's rising every hour. The sailors will be lost, I know."

"Nonsense, gal, there never was a sea I wouldn't launch my surf-boat in. She's aching to get her nose in the spray now, I make no doubt. Look alive, look alive, little gal. Does she drive down any, as you can make out?"

"She's coming on fast, daddy. Don't you make her out by this time?"

"I reckon I do, now. A big vessel she is, too. A rich haul, my gal."

"Look at the sea, daddy—look at the sea! I guess that wave was a good deal bigger than the Jolly Jack. It looked like a green hill, covered with snow, just before it tumbled to pieces. I wish I had been on top of it."

"Where would you have been now ef you had?" asked the burly fisherman, eyeing his companion askance, with an admiring glance.

"Pickin' myself up just below in the sand there," she answered, with a gay laugh, "just as I've done many a time."

"You wasn't never born to be drowneded," said the man, still looking into the eager face with a slow smile. "'Twas full as bad a time as this when I fished you out of the sea, Tangee."

"Was it?" she asked, looking into the roaring ocean with meditative eyes, as if she could see there the picture which she had heard described, but of which she had no recollection—a wrecked ship, a boat-load of sturdy men pulling to the scene through a thousand perils, a mother and babe lowered into the rocking shell, a flood of water sweeping over it and washing it away—only the daring steersman, oar in one hand and babe in the other, sustaining himself until the angry waves tossed him ashore alive.

"Here comes the neighbors, swarmin' out o' their hives," muttered Hardy Joe, as he had long been dubbed. "They'll see fun to-night. We might as well get our tackle ready, and signal the agent, too, fer thar' ain't no power on 'arth kin prevent that ship's beachin'. You'd better go back, gal; I don't see there's any thing fer you to do."

"Oh, I want to watch the vessel. I like to be out. I'm not cold."

"No, I s'pose not. The ice is friz all over ye now, like a new suit. We'll have to put ye in trowsers, Tangee, and ship ye before the mast, yer so crazy about the water."

"I've thought of that myself, daddy."

"Have ye now, r'aly?" cried the man, with a hoarse laugh. "That's jest like ye, gal; but don't ye do it, kase I don't want to spare ye. What would I do without a passenger on board the Jolly Jack?"

Laughing and chuckling at the audacious conceit of the little girl, in resolving to become a sailor, he turned to greet the neighbors who were gathering about the stranded rock, as the highest point, from which to observe the motions of the threatened vessel.

"She ain't a steamer, and she can't hold off," was the unanimous conclusion.

The short, dark afternoon was now drawing to a close. Over at the west, where it was sunset, according to the indications of the clock in the Jolly Jack, not a gleam of light was to be seen—yes! just one fiery arrow darted out of the leaden mass of clouds and struck the unknown ship, as she labored down, borne on by winds and waves, showing her quite clearly at the very moment when she plunged on to a spit of sand which ran far out into the sea. The next instant

the gleam of sunshine was gone, and all was wilder, gloomier and more tempestuous than before.

"She's struck ! she's struck !"

"How she staggers !"

"I never seed the water so high ! How the wind cuts it up ! Why, it's actilly leavin' the sea for a land cruise. I don't believe we can save a single soul—nor none o' her cargo, 'cept what comes ashore o' its own accord."

"There—her signal gun ! She's fully a mile off. I don't think there's a boat kin stand it, fer on that spit the storm-devils rage particular bad."

"I reckon *we'll try*, boys," shouted old Joe, in his hoarse tones. "Here, you land-lubbers as is afraid of a little tossin', you start the fires. Thar ain't no time to lose, gettin' the piles ready. It'll be so dark in fifteen minutes you can't tell a stick o' wood when you see it. I'll run up a lantern on the mast o' the Jolly Jack. We'll ask her if she's in want of immediate relief ; if she is, I'm off, for one. The tugs can't do nothin' in *that* sea. They might as well try to steam up Niagara Falls."

By a system of signals, understood both by wreckers and sailors, the ship was communicated with, and it was ascertained that she was in no immediate danger of going to pieces—that the captain considered his vessel lost, and gave her up to the wreckers.

These wreckers, be it understood, worked under appointed agents, in a manner regulated by law ; and when the captain of a vessel resigned her to their care, systematic efforts were made to save her cargo for the benefit of the underwriters, the wreckers receiving a stipulated portion as their reward. We will not assert that many a confiscated barrel did not unlawfully make glad the stomachs of the poor men ; nor that bits of incongruous finery never set off the soft charms of the fish-wives with a splendor which hinted of concealed bales and boxes ; but, these were only small "asides" in the regular drama, like peculations on Wall street.

Messengers were now dispatched to the nearest point from which signals could be sent to posts in communication with the city, that the underwriters might be apprised that a large merchant vessel was on the sands, in danger of total destruction.

"I'm goin' out to find out her name, and take off such of the crew as would like to take lodgin' in a land-craft. Come along, you'uns as belong to my crew. No use waitin' for a lull; this nor'-easter has got a-goin' at such a rate he couldn't bring hisself up short o' twenty-four hours run, if he should try. Thar won't be a timber of her left by that time in *my* opinion, not even if she's ribbed o' iron."

"I can tell ye her name," said a short skipper, in an india-rubber coat, who had just joined the crowd; "I've only made out to land my own little scud below here. I saw her this mornin', and took a man out to where she was layin' off an' on, working to the northard; but the captain thought, then, he should be able to keep her off. I reckon he wishes now he had me alongside. It's the *Flying Cloud*, of New York, from Hong Kong and Ceylon, with a cargo of silks, shawls, tea and spices."

"An' it's a merry cup o' tay we'll brew, the first chist as comes ashore," cried a fisherman, to whom Jersey was evidently not his native land. "An' we'll dhrink your health in it, Miss Tangee, with hopes that you'll chance on a silk shawl."

"Thank you, Pat; it's much need I have of a silk shawl, isn't it? I'd put it on to go fishin' in, or perhaps use it to rig up a sail for my own craft, when I get one."

"Och, you needn't laugh, wid yer black eyes snappin' like two purty fire-crackers. It's more'n oncet I've seen yees, dressed up to fits in them nice clothes you keep in Hardy Joe's old sea-chist."

"Oh, I put them on to make believe lady. Now, daddy, please let me go out in the boat with you; I'm not a bit afraid."

A chorus of screams from the women, and shouts from the men met this unreasonable proposition.

"May be you ain't nothin' human at all, gal, but jest one o' them critters as lives under the sea. Who knows but that it's a mermaid I've give shelter to in the Jolly Jack? But, let that be as 'twill, you needn't ask no more silly questions like *that*. You stay here, and help tend the fires, if you must be out. And now, good-by, little gal; if I never comes to land, you're welcome to keep our land-craft and all that's in her;

only don't let a land-shark in ; ef ye *must* marry let it be a good sailor boy."

" Oh, daddy, don't talk that way. You'd better not go out ; if it's bad for me it is for you ; don't risk it, father."

No artist ever put upon canvass a scene like that of that twilight on the Jersey shore. The sleety rain had ceased to fall for the time being, but the wind rushed in from the ocean with a sullen, steady roar, while the surf thundered on the sands with a noise which drowned the shouts of human voices, unless pitched in their highest key. The flames of the beach-fires were borne out in horizontal lines, like banners, their red glare casting a weird illumination upon the groups of strangely-clad, rough wreckers, and out upon the tossing foam and billows. The sky was black as the sea over which it hung. The ship was invisible, only an occasional gun, scarcely known from the booming of the waves against the shore, marking her whereabouts. Hardy Joe, with his picked crew of six men, was hauling his boat into the surf, while, so close to them that the firelight showed the foam creeping about her ankles, stood his adopted daughter, watching every movement.

" Look ! look !" she was the first to cry.

At that cry, even Hardy Joe hauled back his boat, and waited for the coming of the event. A ship's boat was seen, tossing like a feather on the billows, having now gained the radius of the beacon-fires, so as to be visible. With a great shout the wreckers seized the ropes and rushed out upon the beach, absolutely heedless of the danger to themselves of being swept off by the rebound of the waves. A dozen men had ropes tied about their waists which were held by comrades, while they stood waist-deep in water, where the next billow would tumble entirely over them, waiting, with intent eyes, to drag the boat ashore, when she came within reach, or to grasp her occupants should they be washed overboard.

It seemed an hour, though it was not over ten minutes, before the boat was swept into their very hands, and they, as well as the crew, landed on the beach in the most promiscuous fashion. But eager help plucked them out of the hissing foam, and the dread undertow of the glossy waters sucked

and eddied back without a victim. The boat's crew were dragged inland to the fires.

Ten men from the doomed ship had saved their lives by extraordinary skill in keeping their frail boat from swamping. Two or three of the ship's officers were among these men.

"I'm almost certain the other boat went down," said the first mate, turning an anxious eye to the weather-quarter from which he had just escaped. "The captain was aboard of her, and our only passenger, as bright and pleasant a lad as ever cheered a ship, with ten others of the crew. I think I saw her go down before we were out of sight. It's no use, my brave fellows, to risk your lives in that devil's cauldron. If they swamped they're beyond help now, and we left nothing alive on the vessel."

"We may pick up a man or two," said Hardy Joe, sturdily. "I 'spose a life or two is worth the tryin'."

With a persistency, which looked as much like obstinacy as courage, he pushed his surf-boat out again, taking his own place as steersman, she being guided by a long oar instead of a paddle. His six men urged themselves to their dangerous work. Watching for the outflow of a heavy wave, they pushed out into the flying foam, with remarkable skill, and the life-boat was tossed beyond sight in a moment.

All the red roses which cold nor wind could beat out of Tangee's cheek, faded then. Pale and silent, with her hands holding the hair back from her ears, as if she could thus hear tidings from the roaring tempest, she stood for a full hour, watching the ocean, heedless of the exciting scenes behind her, where the sailors were being warmed and revived, and were telling the story of their shipwreck. Many eyes beside her own bent anxious looks seaward; but she was wrapped, absorbed beyond all other thought or interest.

After a long, long watch, her sharp gaze detected something on the waves. She called the attention of others to it. It was—no, it was not—yes, it *was* a boat! Frail it looked, as an egg-shell or a leaf, as the storm-god tossed it about with laughter at its littleness. But there were mighty hearts within it—hearts of men tried from childhood to peril, familiar enough with old ocean to answer her back with the laughter of

triumph. For presently the little shell was thrown high and dry on the sands with all her precious cargo safe in it.

One had been added to the number of her occupants during that hour's cruise. One perishing fellow-creature had been plucked from the hungry deep; yet, perhaps, too late for him after all. He lay, like one dead, in the bottom of the boat.

"Look alive there!" cried Hardy Joe, springing to the shore as actively as if he had not been drenched and half-frozen all the evening, to say nothing of his exertions with the oar. "Bear a hand, you land-lubbers. Take this chap to the fire, and find out whether or no he's a gone sucker. We picked him up, floating like a log, with an oar in his two hands, but his sense was washed out of him before we came across him."

Tangee had rushed up to her father and flung her arms about his neck.

"Now, you let a feller's neck alone, gal; you's wuss than a halter. I've been strangled enough with sea-water, to-night, to last me a week. Clear out, and open up the cabin of the Jolly Jack for this 'ere stranger. Git him a berth ready in less'n no time."

The old man's words were rough, but his touch was gentle, as he put Tangee away, and she understood him too well to feel hurt by his rebuffs. They were the caresses of an old sea-dog.

"I'll wait, father, till we know if he's dead or alive."

The mate of the wrecked ship, cold and fatigued as he was, had remained on shore for the return of the wreckers; he pushed forward now for a look at the rescued person.

"It's the passenger I was telling you about. Poor Olla; I'm afraid he's done up. The boat must have gone to bottom, captain and all. But let us do what we can."

As they carried the slender, not very heavy body near to the fire, Tangee caught sight of a young face—that of a boy or youth of eighteen or twenty, with clear-cut, delicate features; hair, as black as her own, clinging in wet curls to a smooth, handsome forehead, and hands white and small as a lady's. A strange sensation of mingled pity and tenderness ran through her as she gazed. She had seen dead and drowned

men before ; but this one was so young and so different. She was quite ready, now, to run home and prepare her own bed for him.

The kettle was boiling on the stove in the little back room—the after cabin of the Jolly Jack—and there was plenty of fire, for Tangee had run home once to replenish it, since the night set in. Blankets, hot and dry were ready when they brought him in, and whisky heating in a tin vessel.

Through much exertion and watchfulness the flitting breath of life was recalled. After half an hour or so, the young man opened his eyes, staring blankly into the unknown faces about him. Then, after being well dried inwardly, with hot punch, as he showed a disposition to sleep, it was thought best to encourage it. He soon was in a heavy slumber, with only Tangee to watch him ; the excitement of the wreck was too strong on the others for them to coop themselves up in the cabin. The fires were to be kept up, and objects sought for, if any thing, human or otherwise, should come ashore.

As for Tangee, she had lost her interest in the out-door tempest. Trimming her lamp, she watched by the bedside of this unexpected visitor. All her wildness had vanished. A mother could not have guarded a babe more gently than she her charge. Once she stole away ; it was to don a better garb, to brush her disordered hair, to give the room a neater look, as if the mere presence of the stranger was a command to it.

CHAPTER III

TANGEE AND HER GUEST.

It was afternoon by the time Mr. Wetmore reached the scene of the wreck. By that time the storm had broken ; a cold blue winter's sky looked down on the tumultuous waters which could not so readily calm themselves ; the wind was running down, but the waves still were billows vast as hills, rolling in upon the sands. His heart was heavy as his eyes rested upon the speck which was pointed out to him as

the battered hull of the good ship *Flying Cloud*, of which he had been so proud, and to which he had entrusted a costly cargo. It was a sight sufficiently melancholy to see the pieces of the vessel working ashore, with chests and boxes, every now and then tossed upon the sands; the ruins of a promising enterprise, and happening at a time when he could ill afford the disappointment.

But there was the deeper tragedy of the loss of the captain, and half the crew. What wretched tidings to send over the wires to the family of the officer, making merry in expectation of his return; and those humble homes, where relations were looked for with equal eagerness! The sea grew hateful in his sight, and he turned his eyes away with a sick and weary feeling.

He was deeply thankful when met by the tidings that Oliver Gifford was alive, and would probably recover, and all lesser emotion was swept from his mind. Before communicating with the agent or listening to the first-mate's account of the accident, he hurried to the house of Hardy Joe, and was ushered into that queer place, the forward cabin of the *Jolly Jack*. The windows of this room were round like the port-holes of a vessel; a lamp was swung from the center, the floor was scoured as white as the deck of a well-kept ship; on some shelves between the port-holes were ranged various wonders of the deep, coral, shells, sea-weed; on the other side, between the opposite windows, a berth was built; Tangee's sleeping place this was; it had a lace-frilled pillow and white cover. A little, hard, wooden settee, at the end between the wall and the door, which opened into the after cabin, was fastened to the floor, as if in danger of being thrown wildly about by tossing storms unless firmly anchored in its place.

Mr. Wetmore did not remark these peculiarities at the first glance; his thoughts and eyes were concentrated on the berth where the son of his friend, for whom, in a manner, he felt himself responsible, lay, flushed with fever and but semi-conscious of what had occurred or of his present surroundings. When he saw the boy he felt even more interested and troubled than before. There was something attractive and refined in the delicately-cut features, the clear, dark skin and

soft hair—delicate they all were, but not effeminate. Indeed, the arch of the brow and curve of the nostril promised plenty of fire and spirit. One would hardly have guessed he had been born on northern soil, and was a native of a New England State, so thoroughly had his growth in a tropical climate among a strange people influenced his development. The hot suns had thinned his blood and flesh and embrowned his skin, while his dark hair and eyes added still more to his foreign appearance.

A flush was on his face, now, and his eyes were too bright. Mr. Wetmore was still more concerned when he had counted his rising pulse.

“Poor Olla,” as the mate had said.

The sleeting storm to which he had long been exposed, and which had seemed to freeze the blood in his veins, had been severe even upon the hardy northern sailors; to him it had been terrible; only the courage of an indomitable will had enabled him to endure it, and when the moment of greatest trial came, and the boat in which they sought to make the land was swamped, that same courage still upheld him. He was an excellent swimmer, one of the pleasures of his oriental life being to float and toss for hours in the warm inland waters, under an evening sky; and now, though his muscles were stiff, and veins curdled by the cold, he had clung to his oar, and supported himself until wholly insensible, and in this condition had been met and picked up by the brave fishermen who had gone to the rescue.

“I wish I had him home” said the merchant, unconsciously uttering his thought aloud, as he stood by the narrow berth.

“We will take good care of him, sir, until he is able to go.”

The musical voice was that of a child, but the decision it expressed was that of a woman; there was a calmness and confidence in it which made her hearer smile, as he turned to take a second look at the nurse, established near the boy's bed.

He could not but look long and curiously. He would as soon have expected to come across an original Titian in a junk shop, as this exquisite bit of life and color, this brilliant

young creature in the wrecker's cabin. Tangee was like another being from the wild girl who yesterday braved the storm with flying hair and flashing eyes, with an old cloak dripping about her shoulders, and thick shoes burdening her slender feet. Beautiful she was, then, if any one had space in which to observe and note how the very spirit of the elements seemed to dilate in her little figure and glorify her face.

But to-day, Tangee was nurse to a sick stranger. She had put on her best dress, and a pair of noiseless slippers, tied a little white apron about her waist and smoothed her long black hair into glossy braids. She had a string of gold beads about her neck, and some bright coral bracelets upon her beautiful brown arms, which were as round and polished and smooth as it was possible for flesh to be.

With the flashing light of her black eyes softened into pensiveness by her interest in her patient, and with the pretty womanly air of responsibility which she wore, if the seakings had brought her up and left her there, the merchant could hardly have been more astonished. About the age of his own Katie, fully as charming, though of an entirely different style of beauty ; perfectly self-possessed and yet modest, with no appearance of hard work or a rough life about her, the longer he gazed upon her the more he wondered.

It chanced, when he entered the Jolly Jack, that no one was present but Tangee, her father having gone to look after prizes and the mate, who had been in the most of the morning, having been called away after speaking with Mr. Wetmore.

"You are very kind, miss ; I see you have done every thing possible for his comfort. Have you any physician near?"

"None nearer than the nearest village. We mostly do our own doctoring."

"This young man's fever will have to be attended to. I must send off for a doctor. I am afraid he will be ill for some days."

"Are you his father?" asked Tangee, simply.

"No, child, I never saw him before ; but he is the only son of a dear friend, and was sent to me, so that I am his guardian, in a manner, and feel a weighty responsibility about his present condition."

"I'm a pretty good nurse, sir. When father was down with the typhus the doctor said I carried him through."

"That was bravely done, for one of your years. Who is your father?"

"Hardy Joe they call him, sir. A big man, with a gray beard. Perhaps you saw him as you come in. I believe his name is Joseph Van Horn; but it's so long since I was told so, I would hardly like to swear to it. He's an old Jersey-man, born and bred. He's smoked through and through, and pickled with salt water, till he's like a dried salmon, I tell him, when I want to tease him," and she laughed very softly but merrily.

"And you pretend to say that that great, burly fisherman, who goes about like a bottled nor'-easter, is *your* father?"

"About the same thing, I reckon. He's full as good." She patted her foot decisively, and looked up at him with a flash of her eyes, as if something in his tone had cast opprobrium on one she loved. The merchant began to be amused by his spirited little hostess.

"Then I suppose I am to call you Miss Van Horn?"

She laughed more merrily than before.

"Really, I can not tell you, sir. Nobody ever called me so."

"By what name shall I address you, then?"

"Most folks call me Tangee."

"Tangee?"

"It's a strange name, isn't it? and I came by it strangely. You must know, sir, I'm nothing but a waif, myself, and the poorest prize, I reckon, that Hardy Joe ever brought ashore. He picked *me* up, as he did this young gentleman, sir, out of just such a storm. I was about a year and a half old then, and when I begun to cry and complain, I said, all the time, 'Tangee—Tangee,' so they called me that. Joe's wife was alive then; but she's dead now, and I'm all he's got to keep the Jolly Jack trim for him."

"Was no one else saved out of the ship with you?"

"Not a soul, so they say, sir."

"And you do not know your country, name, nor lineage?"

"I know nothing but that I'm Hardy Joe's adopted daughter, and love him with all my heart."

"Your own father was made of finer material than that old hulk," thought her questioner, marking the smallness of her feet and hands, and that symmetry of outline and fine texture of the skin which had at first surprised him. "Do you never wish that you had some knowledge of your parentage?" he continued, aloud.

"Well, yes, I do, sometimes, dream of it," she answered, a cloud passing over her bright face. "I sometimes sit on the sands and look off across the wide sea, and wonder where my home was. But, what matters it? My mother is dead, for I was taken out of her lifeless arms—and it's likely my father is, also. Joe is very, very good to me. I love the ocean—I love to fish and row my boat."

"You think you will always be satisfied to keep house for Joe in this queer little home, do you, Tangee?"

Yesterday the girl's answer would have come promptly from her lips in a gay affirmative; to-day she hesitated, cast a glance upon the face of her patient as if she saw there something which awoke other aspirations, and her answer came in a low voice:

"I have been a happy child always, sir."

"Was the name of the vessel unknown?"

"It was an awful storm. It raged a week. When it was over she was gone entirely—sunk. They tried to raise her but they never made out. No, sir; they did not even find out her name or port. From such of her cargo as came ashore, they made it out to be loaded with East Indian merchandise. A trunk was washed on the beach which is generally believed to have been my mother's, for one of the dresses was the same in pattern as my own. I have that trunk, with all its contents, still. They'll make me a nice wedding outfit, when I'm large enough to wear them, and old enough to be married," with a mischievous smile and half-blush.

"Never destroy them," said Mr. Wetmore; "they may be of great value yet. Can you not find me a messenger, who will ride for a doctor, Miss Tangee? I will sit here until you return."

"I reckon I'd better go myself. I don't make much of walking a few miles on a bright day, and the men are all crazy about the wreck. If you'll give him his milk punch

once every half hour, sir, and see that the fire don't go out, I'll be back by supper-time with the doctor."

"I don't like to ask you, my child. Is there no one I can hire, by paying him enough?"

"Oh, don't you fret about me! I'd rather be out-doors than in, any time. I'll put on my boots, and be off."

She went into the little back room and put on her stout shoes, with a blanket shawl, and a hood a little better than the one which had blown away, and showing her glowing face a moment in the door, with the injunction on the stranger not to forget to be regular about the milk punch, was away.

By night-time, as she promised, she had a physician there, who had been so obliging, at sight of her pretty face, as to bring her back in his buggy. He pronounced the patient's state to be not altogether free from danger; his constitution, habituated to a warm climate, had been severely shocked by the exposure he had undergone; but, good nursing, doubtless, would bring him out all right in ten or fifteen days. Mr. Wetmore wanted to send a nurse down from the city; but the physician, noting the tidy and exact ways of the maiden, and the zeal and discretion she had thus far displayed, said it was better for Tangee to have the charge, under his direction, than for the house to receive another inmate, not half so quiet, and no wiser.

"But it will be too much for her."

The girl laughed and shook her head.

"She has plenty of endurance," said the doctor; "I can see that. And I guess Joe will be a right hand to her, when this out-door excitement has worn off a little. I will come over once a day; and if, at any time, I think you needed, I will dispatch a messenger."

Thus it was arranged. The merchant kept watch that night, but the next day, business being pressing, and matters alongshore being all in the hands of the proper agent, he returned to the city, still a good deal anxious about his friend's son, and perplexed about his own affairs.

That evening, when he reëntered his luxurious home, and was met by his daughter, lovely in a blue silk dress and lace ruffles, those wild scenes on the Jersey coast appeared to him more like a singular dream than a late reality.

"I believe I have been asleep the last two days," he said, when, dinner over, and Katie on his lap, he sat in his pleasant library. "It is true, then, what they say when they call Jersey a foreign land. I seem to myself to have been a thousand miles away! I have seen the queerest class of people, heard the oddest language, and witnessed an entirely novel manner of living. Katie, darling, how would you like to be a fish-wife? How would you like to make your living catching fish in summer and wrecks in winter? Don't look so horrified, little girl. There are people who have to do it, and they have their romances, too. I have a fiction in my mind's eye now," and Mr. Wetmore went on with a description of the quaint old Jolly Jack, and its quaint old owner, and the beautiful young girl that flourished in that strange spot, with all the romantic suggestions of her brief history.

Katie listened with great attention, but most eagerly to such parts of the story as referred to Oliver Gifford. Did he seem pleasant? Was he good-looking? Did her father think she would like him?

As he was a very sick and half-delirious boy her hearer could not tell how interesting he might be in his normal state. Handsome he certainly was, with a face to attract regard. Then Katie wished that he could have been brought to their house to be taken care of; a pang of jealousy, quite unacknowledged by herself, made her uneasy at thought of the girl whom her father praised. Oliver Gifford was their friend, and going to be their guest, and it seemed too bad that this strange young girl should have the opportunity of doing him all the kindness.

Mr. Wetmore went down again on Saturday afternoon, and staid at the Jolly Jack until Monday morning. He found Oliver much better. He had full possession of his senses now, and, though weak, was able to give a clear account of his experience of the shipwreck. It was evident that the boy owed his life to a dauntless courage and self-possession. Tangee sat at the foot of the berth, half hidden by the curtain, while he told, in the faint tones of illness, his story of suffering and danger, and expressed his great gratitude to the man who had picked him up, and to the kind family who had

since taken charge of him. Her cheeks were aflame with vivid color, and the long lashes drooped over her eyes.

"I've lost all my money and clothing, I suppose," said Oliver. "What shall I do until I hear from father? I can not even pay the doctor, nor these good friends here."

"I will undertake to be your banker until you hear from home," was the merchant's smiling reply; but Tangee looked up, and said, "for their part they should feel *insulted* at the mention of pay."

The merchant would have laughingly remonstrated, but the young man put his hand on his arm and whispered:

"Don't hurt her feelings, please, Mr. Wetmore. I can make them presents in such a way as not to offend them."

Mr. Wetmore pretended to take his meals at the miserable tavern at which the fishermen in general took their whisky and apple-jack; but he was glad to accept Tangee's invitation to Sunday's dinner. The meal was not precisely equal to that served in his own house; but it was not bad, and it had a rich relish of novelty about it. The fish, baked and stuffed, were delicious, and the coffee was good. He had never eaten better oysters, more delicately cooked. Oliver liked the oysters, too, and found them nourishing.

The visitor could not talk half as much as he wished to his young friend about his father and Ceylon.

"But I shall be here next Friday to bring you home with me," he said, when the long Sunday was over, and he was going away. "Katie is crazy to see you, and it must be tedious for you here."

"It isn't the least bit tedious," Oliver answered his nurse, as soon as the door closed on the unsuspecting merchant. "I could live here for ever, as far as that goes. I never liked, very well, to meet strangers, and I've grown so well acquainted here, I do not like to go away."

"Suppose you stay with us, then, Olla,"—he had desired her to call him Olla—"and be a fisherman."

"I don't think father would give his consent to it," replied the young gentleman, smiling at thought of her innocence of the world and its ways. "He has other plans for me. I am his only son and heir, you see; and he is rich, and expects me to make a gentleman of myself. But, I like it here,

Tangee. I would rather go fishing than go to school—that is, when the weather gets warm. At present, I'd rather lie in bed, and have you take care of me. It's so odd of your father to call his house a ship, and to make it as much like one as possible. I can never forget it, nor that he saved my life, nor that you finished the good work for him. I wonder what Oliver Gifford, senior, would say if he could take a peep at his precious baby now? It's a queer place, Ceylon is, Tangee. We ride elephants there, and there are sometimes tigers in the forest. Plenty of monkeys, too, and the air is sweet with cinnamon. I shall freeze to death here, I fear, when I have to go out of doors."

"I think I must have been in Ceylon," mused Tangee, with a far-away, dreamy look. "I have seen all the things you have told me about, when I lie in the hot sand on a summer day, and look up into the warm, blue sky, or lean over my boat and gaze down into the placid, blue water."

Another week of such chattering as this, with Oliver well enough to sit up, and the two alone together all day, was equal to years of ordinary intercourse in ripening the friendship which had sprung up between them. As for Tangee, who had always been happy, she walked in a paradise of delight; intense as her life had been, it seemed to her that she had never lived before. "Olla" knew so much, and talked of such interesting things; and she, in return, had only to tell him of her fishing, her search for shells, her little voyages made in an open boat, when she would lie down in the bottom and let the water rock her like a cradle.

Very warm and steadfast friends were the two, when Mr. Wetmore came, like some cruel fate, to divide them. Tangee could not keep from crying, which made Oliver kiss her, and promise most certainly to spend his first vacation at the Jolly Jack, and also, in the meantime, to send her out a bundle of books and some pictures for the cabin walls. The merchant heard the promise of the visit with a quiet smile; he knew enough of the world to believe that the memory of the Jolly Jack would vanish with sufficient rapidity, when new and more fitting scenes arose in the youth's experience.

Poor Tangee! the rest of the winter, to her, was like the

fasting which follows after a feast. Hitherto she had beer company for herself; her out-door excitement and the vivacious fancies of her own mind had been society enough. Now she felt the craving of a new want, and it was doubtful if she ever would be so happy again.

Then came a vague unrest to stir and distress her to her soul. Olla was something beyond her; he had qualities and graces which she had not. That merchant's daughter, doubtless she, also, was far superior to herself. She opened the books which Oliver duly sent her, along with a rich freight of other pretty things, and looked into them with a keen interest to find what it was which she lacked, and which these people had.

Well, the books were very good company, too, in the long winter evenings, and she sometimes read chapters to daddy Joe, which would make him take his pipe out of his mouth and stare with all his eyes.

"That may be so, and then ag'in it mayn't; but I'd rather have my fishin'-tackle and my pipe, nor all of it," he would ejaculate; and then the smoke would ascend again, and wind the cabin about with blue wreaths, and, after awhile, Joe would fall asleep on his settee, and Tangee would stop reading to think of Oliver.

CHAPTER IV.

TWO GIRLS.

KATE, Kitty, Katie!

Where, on the face of the wide earth, was there ever anything so bewitchingly lovely as Katie Wetmore?

This was the question which Oliver asked himself twenty times a day during his stay in her father's house. She was, indeed, a very pretty girl, with fair complexion and golden hair—a blonde beauty, such as the young East Indian never before had seen. It had, for him, the charm of novelty, apart from its own intrinsic claims to admiration. He was never

tired of looking at the pink rose in her cheek, the blue veins in her temple, the glitter of her wavy hair, and the soft whiteness of her throat and arms. Never, until he met poor Tangee, the dark little beauty of Squall Inlet, had he associated with one of the other sex so near his own age. He had found a strange charm in her society ; but "cousin Katie," for thus he was permitted to call her, was a still more wonderful and delightful friend.

She could not talk with him about fishing and rowing, but she could sing and play and waltz, and was little less than an angel in his eyes.

He had too true a heart to be guilty of ingratitude ; he remembered the tender nursing of the fisherman's daughter, sending her, as we have said, a rich package of presents, among which was the material for a silk dress, and a pair of kid shoes and gloves ; for he fancied that Tangee would look more like Katie if dressed in the same manner. He still intended to fulfil the promise of a summer visit ; but he did not dream of it, and long for it, by day and night, as she did to whom he had made the promise.

When he had fully recovered from the effects of the shipwreck, and had been shown the wonders of the city, he went away to school, where he was immensely liked, and occasionally laughed at for his ignorance of American customs and his backwardness in study. He was of too fiery a spirit to brook much ridicule, and resolved to make himself equal to the best of them, so that Mr. Wetmore soon had flattering accounts of his progress, and always spoke to his daughter in glowing terms of his friend's son.

There was that about Oliver's gay and fresh manners, and the very wilfulness of some of his ways, which pleased young and old. It may be that the merchant, albeit Katie was but in her fifteenth year, looked forward to a union of the two, as something pleasant to contemplate. His own fortunes had trembled in the balance when the *Flying Cloud* went down, but had finally righted and steadied themselves. Gifford, he understood, had accumulated great wealth in the East, while the boy himself was so lovable, that he could ask nothing better for his motherless girl, than that such a union should take place when the parties should reach the proper age.

He was a little annoyed, then, when the summer vacation came, and Oliver, joining them at their country house, began, after a few weeks, to be restless, and ask permission to pay a fortnight visit to Barnegat Beach. He could not very well refuse it, though he said all he could to discourage it. Katie, too, pouted her rosy lips, and showed so much displeasure that Oliver would certainly have resigned his project had a strong passion not influenced his conduct. He was pining for the ocean ; never before had he lived so long out of sight of it ; and he was homesick, with a child's homesickness, to rove again, at will, upon its shores, and breast its billows. This, even more than the memory of Tangee, called him to Squall Inlet. If Mr. Wetmore had realized the young man's want, he would have taken him and Katie to Newport ; but he did not understand it.

In the mean time, as the fullness of summer grew, and the hot July days came on, Tangee had moods of deep musing interrupted by fits of restless watchfulness. She must even make a visit to the nearest town to have the silk which Olla sent her made up, and to buy herself a bonnet which was the envy of the barefooted, bareheaded women and girls of the beach. Not that she wore the bonnet, now that she had it ; but she showed it to such as came from far and near to view it. She had earned the money to buy it with, not pin-money, but fish-money ; and after she got it, decided that she looked better in her old straw hat, with a brim a quarter of a yard wide—and so she did !

Summer ! so full of bloom and light ! its warmth and glory were as precious to her, as to the poor East Indian who had shivered all the spring in his warmly-lined cloak. But summer on the gray sands of the Jersey shore, was not summer back in the green country. It did not mean gardens flushed with roses, and dewy fields, sweet with the scent of new-mown hay. It did not mean lilies and pinks, strawberries and cream, low music of rustling maple-leaves, and shadowy porches odorous with honeysuckle. It meant a heaven filled with strong light, sands so hot that they scorched the feet, an ocean melting and sparkling, rising and falling, sunny and blue as the sky above it. It meant intense luster, intense

warmth, an infinity of air, water and sky, a continual undertone of music, deep and vague. The low, sandy beach and the wide-rolling ocean. This was all the scenery which Tangee required for the making up of all the parts which her imagination played. The charm of woods and fields was almost unknown to her; a child of the winds and waves, the ocean, during that fierce baptism during her infancy, seemed to have adopted her. Yet she would have had a love for flowers, if she had had much knowledge of them. She had planted a morning-glory at the stern of the Jolly Jack, and by the first of July it waved its long green banners and beautiful purple blossoms from the very mast-head, so as utterly to obscure the tattered remnant of the old flag, and to cast dishonor on the "glorious Fourth," as Joe said, "as the Jolly Jack had never afore faced without the stars and stripes a-streaming welcome as it rose."

One day in August Tangee set the table for supper long before sunset, and then, tying on her broad-brimmed hat, she went down to the little cove where her boat was moored—a tiny affair, which she rowed about whenever it pleased her. The day was none too sultry and none too bright for her; taking off her shoes and stockings, she hid them under an inverted bucket, in which she sometimes kept her minnows, and waded out into the little bay to cool her little brown feet. Then she climbed into her skiff and pulled out into the wide ocean. She wanted to see the sun set in the water. For a long time she rowed steadily out, until she was far away from shore, and the sun was skimming the horizon's rim in the west over the Inlet. Then she dropped the oars, flung her hat in the bottom of the boat, dipped her hands and face in the sea, watched the golden crests of the waves change to roses, then stretched herself out with her face turned toward the sky, and let the boat follow the current. She knew that the tide was setting in, and that she should be drifted toward the shore, and she loved to be thus

"Rocked in the cradle of the deep."

Twilight deepened down the hollow sky and rested on the ocean as she floated indolently, wrapt in dreams that grew every day more sad. Olla had not come; probably he did not mean to keep his promise; he had forgotten her, while she

had thought constantly of him. She had watched and waited until weary with disappointment. As the night and the darkness grew, she wept, with only the great stars throbbing through the heat to see her tears.

She had better have been minding her boat, for a small schooner, sailing down the coast on a fishing excursion, did not notice the tiny skiff in the twilight, but kept on and on, directly down upon it, sailing so noiselessly with its sleepy crew, that Tangee, hearing only the throbbing of her own pulse in her throat, was unwarned of coming peril.

"Port your helm!" suddenly cried a ringing voice, and some one on the deck of the little vessel sprung to the steersman's side; "we are running down a small boat."

But the order came too late! Down upon the helpless skiff bore the schooner, and swept it under.

"It was only a boat broke loose from its moorings; there was nobody aboard," said the tiller-man. "Don't be frightened, sir," laughing, partly in the reaction his own feelings experienced.

"I'm not sure of that, I thought I heard a cry."

A dark object came to the surface a rod or two away. Instantly the speaker threw off his jacket, and sprang overboard. Swimming rapidly towards the figure, which had now disappeared, he seized as it again rose.

"A woman," he muttered, as he grasped the floating dress and hair. He soon had his burden safely aboard.

"Tangee!" he cried, as they took her into the light of the ship's lantern, to see how much she was injured.

She opened her eyes and smiled faintly at the sound of his voice.

"Something struck me on the temple I think, Olla," she said, and then fainted away.

One of the sailors had a flask in his pocket. They gave her some spirits, and bathed the wound in her temple.

"I know her well," said the sailor-fisherman; "she's Hardy Joe's darter. The purtiest gal on the coast, and allers on the water. She lives on it. I wouldn't no more like to be the death o' her, than to shoot a mermaid or an albatross."

"I know her, too," said his young gentleman passenger, who had rescued her from the water. She took care of me,

last winter, when I was used up by that shipwreck, and I was just on my way to fish awhile with her father."

"And now you've paid me back for nursing you, by snatching *me* from the fishes," murmured Tangee, opening her eyes. "The blow stunned me so that I could not swim. I was sick for a moment, but it's all over now. I s'pose daddy will scold at the loss of the boat."

"I'll get you a better one," said Oliver, "he must not blame you."

"I'll be minding the oars, next time, instead of staring up at the stars," she said, laughing, and wringing the water out of her hair.

"I am on my way for a fortnight trip in the Jolly Jack, Tangee."

"Oh, are you? You should not have put it off so long."

No one would have guessed, from her careless tone, that she had been crying herself ill, not fifteen minutes ago, over the fact of his staying away. Tangee was young and ignorant, but she had a woman's instinct which teaches her to hide her heart.

"There'd 'a been a tall lot o' mournin' 'long shore, if we had'nt fished *you* up, arter capsizin' you in that style, Tangee," said another one of the fishermen who now came forward, having been sound asleep on the deck when the accident happened.

He was a tall young fellow, brown and athletic, as Oliver saw by the lantern's gleam, roughly-dressed and unpolished in speech; but the beau-ideal of many a Jersey fisherman's daughter, whose eyes followed his easy, swinging gait and nut-brown curls with daily admiration.

"I should have gone to live with those sea-women about whom I have read, I suppose, Will," was her careless reply.

"You would make a pretty bride for some of those sea-kings," said Oliver, glancing at the long black hair rippling and dripping over her shoulders; "did you find the poem I marked for you in one of the books?—"

"Fairy Kandore,
Prince of the sea,
Saw a maid on the shore,
Sleeping under a tree.

“Thou fairest of maidens,
I'll bear thee below,
To make thee my bride,
Where the sea-forests grow.

“Fairy Kandore
Coral and pearl
Did lavish upon her,
That fair Indian girl.

“But she pined for her lover,
Her bright (Jersey) home,
And she died 'mid the sea-maidens,
Under the foam.”

“Oh, you get out with your poetry,” exclaimed the same young fellow, with a contemptuous nod at the young gentleman; “our Tangee ain't up to such things, and she don't care for 'em, I'll swear.”

Oliver was rather surprised at this rudeness; as the native courtesy of his own manner toward all, generally won him politeness in return, even from coarse people; but when he saw the sudden flash in the young fisherman's eye, he thought he understood it.

“He is jealous,” he thought to himself, and with no desire to annoy him by revealing how intimate his friendship with the young girl was, he walked away to another part of the boat, saying, with a light laugh, “well, perhaps not. I came down here to fish, and not to talk rhymes; so I suppose I had better confine my discourse to fishing.”

“Are you hurt? does your head ache?” asked Will Williams, in a low voice, taking up a handful of Tangee's hair, and wringing the water out of it.

“A little—nothing worth fretting about. I suppose I'll have a beauty-mark on my temple for a few days.”

“If you'd 'a gone to the bottom, Tangee, nobody would 'a knowed what had become of you. We should 'a thought, sure enough, that the water-witches had got you. Thar ud 'a been *one* heart would have ached a good long spell,” he added, in a whisper.

“Oh, yes, I know,” said she, with an innocent glance, “Hardy Joe wouldn't get over the loss of his little girl in a day, if she is as full of tricks as an egg is full of meat.”

“You go 'long! you know what I mean, well enough. But

say ! what's that city chap a doin', down here with us rough 'uns ?"

" You have heard us tell about his being shipwrecked, and stopping a couple o' weeks with father, on account of sickness. He promised, then, he'd come down, in the summer, and fish. He lived on an island at home, and he's very fond of the water."

" Um ! I shouldn't wonder."

" You must be polite to him, Will ; what's the use of being so rude ?"

" I likes right well to be polite to them as comes here to make themselves so *very* agreeable," said the youth, with bitter sarcasm.

But Tangee, in her childishness, did not notice the bitterness, taking the speech in good faith.

" That's right, Will. When he wants a boat, or some one to help him, I'll send him to you. He will pay you very freely."

" Ay, ay !" growled Will.

In twenty minutes the schooner cast anchor so near the shore that Tangee dropped down her side and waded ashore, followed by Oliver, with his shoes and stockings in his hand.

" Dear me," cried Tangee, " my shoes are under the bucket down in the cove where I can't get them till morning. I shall have to wear the pretty pair you sent me, Oliver."

She chatted away all the distance to the Jolly Jack, that he might not see how very happy his coming had made her.

" Daddy, daddy ! here's Oliver," she called, when, nearing home, she saw by the glimmer of his pipe, and perceived by the odor of the evening smoke, that her father was sitting in the door after his custom, when, having paid his visit to the one tavern, and taken his single glass of grog, he prepared his mind for a tranquil night's rest by an hour's steady " lug at his pipe."

Slipping into the kitchen, with a dry frock, she came back after a a little time, her hair one mass of glossy ripples—it being still too wet to be manageable—and a neat rose-colored muslin on, which, though inexpensive, was as nice as one of Katie's own could be. The swinging lamp in the fore-cabin

being lighted, Oliver could see, to good advantage, her bright smile and beautiful face.

"Are you glad to have me come, Tangee?"

She answered him with a smile.

"I thought her perfect, before," he said, turning to the old skipper, "and yet she has improved. May I kiss her, Joe?"

"I don't know as there'd be any harm in it, if 'twa'n't done too often," laughed old Joe. "You ought to salute when a gallant East Injyman comes into port, gal, and another when he ups with his anchor ag'in; but none o' that betwixt and between, mind ye."

Oliver kissed the smooth, brown cheek, as dark as his own, but as soft as velvet to his touch.

"I'm going to call you sister, Tangee, after this," he said; "I call Katie cousin, and why not you sister?"

"Have you had any supper, Olla?"

"Not a bit, nor dinner either, except crackers and cheese; but don't you put yourself to trouble to-night."

"Never you mind the trouble, Olla. Tell father about the accident while I see about a cup of tea."

Now Tangee had purchased a little paper-covered cook-book, early in the season, and had studied that as well as poetry and history; for the girl or woman who wishes to please a man knows that to please his appetite is one of the "arts" *not* to be neglected, and more effective than much slenderly-fed sentiment. She had a pot of pickled oysters, and a sponge-cake as light as sea-foam, in her larder, with biscuits and other small matters which made a tempting supper. Little bubbles of song rose from her lips and floated in ripples about the lamp, as she arranged the table. She could hear, in the pauses of her own broken song, the two men, talking in the front door. Presently the tea was steeped, and Oliver called to his repast.

"Is your cousin Katie beautiful?" asked she, as she poured the tea, looking up at him suddenly, with bright, dark eyes.

"Oh, very!" holding the lump of sugar suspended over his cup in the eagerness of his reply. "I can not describe her to you, Tangee. She is not dark, like us. She is as white as a

lily, and yet as pink as a rose—blonde, the French say. I never saw a real blonde before. Her eyes are as blue as the water and her hair like gold thread; I have a lock of it in my vest-pocket. I will show it to you to-morrow."

The bright dark eyes which had searched his own fell, and Oliver dropped the sugar into his tea. After that Tangee did not say much; she grew rather pale and became restless. As their guest likewise was fatigued and sleepy, he soon said:

"Your ocean-bath was too much for you, sister; you look pale. I, too, am tired, and if you will say where I am to sleep I will bid you good-night and sweet dreams."

"In my berth, Olla, where you once recovered your health."

When Tangee undressed in the little back room which she had fitted up for her own use, during Oliver's stay, she looked at her brown shoulders and arms in the broken mirror, repeating,

"She is not dark, like us."

The next morning, before Oliver was up, Tangee ran down to the cove for her shoes and stockings. On her way back she met Will Williams, off to the schooner for a day's fishing.

"I don't see as you're any the worse for being run down by a vessel or two," he said, looking at her with admiring eyes. "It's plain you wasn't born to be drowned."

"Then, I'm to infer that you think I'm sure to be hanged?"

"Yes, your neck looks like a rope would make a purty necklace! Tell you what 'tis, Tangee, if I've good luck with my fishin' this summer, I mean to buy you a real gold chain."

"You needn't mind it, Will; better give it to Sally, for I've those gold beads, which I always wear, and Sally has nothing but glass ones."

"I shan't do no such a thing, Tangee. Since you're growing such a tall girl, I don't mind Sally any more. I'm goin' to wait for you."

"I'm afraid you'll get tired of waiting then."

"I'll bide my time, sis. How's the young lady from the city, this morning?"

"The young lady?"

"Ha, ha, ha! the young gentleman, I mean, with a diamond ring on his finger, and hands as soft as cats' paws, that's come down here to fish with a crooked pin, with a silk thread for a line."

"I don't like you, Will, and I shan't answer you. Mr. Gifford's almost as strong as you are; and he can beat you swimmin' or rowin', I'll bet a blue-fish."

"I'll bet a pickled whale ag'in your blue-fish that he can't do neither; but, if you like, I'll give him a chance to see whose strongest in a reg'lar skrimmage."

"What makes you so cross, Will? Did Mr. Gifford do any thing unkind to you, yesterday? Has he injured you any?"

"Not as I knows on, so fur; but I ain't sure but he will, if he keeps on. Howsomever, Tangee, I don't intend to pick a quarrel with him, unless he provokes me to it. How long's he going to stay?"

"A couple of weeks, he said."

"I s'pose all the gals 'twixt here and Little Egg harbor will be head-over-ears in love with him by that time. They can't look at a decent man, when them city swells is out here makin' game of them behind their backs. Don't you be made a fool of, Tangee; you jest keep your heart shet up as tight as a clam."

"My heart?" cried she, with a joyous burst of laughter; "I didn't know I had one, Will. Better talk to the older girls, and not to a little chit like me. Besides, this young gentleman has a lady-love already selected."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes; he promised to show me a lock of her hair to-day."

"That alters the case; I hain't no objections to doin' the agreeable in the way of fishin' and chowder-parties, if that's r'ally what he's arter. But you look sharp to yourself; you're mighty purty, if you do hail from the Jolly Jack, and he might take a shine to you."

"I don't know much about the world, Will; nothin', except

what I've read in papers and books; but I know enough to be quite sure that Hardy Joe and his little girl are not fit company for ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Gifford likes us because we saved his life; he likes us *here*, on the beach, but he wouldn't like us any where else."

"But *you* ain't like Hardy Joe, nor none of the rest of us, Tangee. You are a lady *born*, and it won't take long to pick up the breedin'."

"I may be a lady, Will, like Cinderella in her rags. One thing is certain, I've got breakfast to get, and ought to be about it."

She hurried on, while he stood still, watching her.

"She's too purty for *us*; she do seem so out o' place in that old tub of Hardy Joe's. Yet she becomes it, too; thar ain't such a handsome spot on the coast as she's made o' that old wrack. I wish I had money enough to take care o' her as she ought to be took care of. I've half a notion to go on a whalin' viage."

Breakfast was not long out of the way in the Jolly Jack, before Tangee and Oliver were afloat, in a little boat, with no object but to let the hours slip by, while they drank in pleasure from each other's society, and from the sense of solitude and infinity about them.

CHAPTER V.

ENGAGED.

OLIVER did not even wish to fish, this first day of his return to the presence of old Ocean. To feel the broad sky over him and the blue deep under him, was happiness of itself. To have him near her was joy enough for his companion; yet her pleasure was chilled by a vague disquiet. Tangee was not so much of a child as she had been the previous winter, even; she did not know that she was jealous, and yet the pain of jealousy was gnawing in her breast, that calm, sunshiny day.

"Let me see Katie's hair," she said abruptly, after a long silence, during which they had floated slowly down the beach.

"Here it is," he said, taking a little package from his vest-pocket, and, undoing the tissue paper in which it was wrapped, he held up a curl of fine hair, which glittered like the rays of the sun, as the breeze waved it lightly out.

"How beautiful, Olla! I wish mine were that color!"

"You must give me a lock of yours, before I go, to put with it; Katie will wish to see yours, I have talked so much about you. The contrast will make each look prettier."

Tangee brightened up considerably at this; if Oliver wanted her hair, also, it was not so fatal that he should have another girl's.

"How would you like to see Katie's photograph?"

"Have you it with you?"

"Yes; look at it, and tell me what you think."

She eagerly received the little case, and looked long at the fair young creature mirrored within.

"She is lovely," she said at last, with a sigh. "Are all the young girls, away from the beach, who live in cities, as beautiful?"

"Why no, you little puss; not any of them; that is, very few of them. Next to Katie, you are the handsomest girl I have ever seen. Sometimes I think you eclipse her, when you are animated."

"Oh, no, Olla; I know very well that I could not be so sweet and fair as Katie. I should like to go away to school, if it were not for leaving daddy. I mean to ask him what he thinks about it."

"I wish you *could* go, Tangee; it is all you need to make you anybody's equal. You would learn, then, not to say 'daddy'."

"Is that vulgar?" she asked, blushing; and in proof of her sensitiveness to her mistakes, she never used the word thereafter.

When Will Williams came in at sunset from his day's fishing, he passed the two going out for their evening row, and a frown gathered on his face; but when Tangee called out to him to ask him if he would take out Oliver on the morrow, he consented with a good grace.

"It will keep them apart for one day, at least," was his reflection.

That was a happy two weeks for Tangee. To have a companion as fearless and as fond of the ocean as herself, doubled all her delights. They hunted sea-weed and shells, had clam-bakes for two, as well as some on a larger *scale*, when the company was not limited to two; went on wonderful exploring expeditions, from which they returned half-famished, and laden down with worthless treasures of the deep and of the beach. A pair of children they were, verily, pure in heart, and ignorant of the source of half their exquisite happiness.

During that visit, Katie's image faded almost out of Oliver's mind; it was as faint and uncertain as that of the unlucky photograph, which he dropped into the water, and had to dive after. There was a fervor and brilliancy about Tangee's tropical nature which made her all-absorbing to those about her. Her will, wishes, and fancies, became laws to her friends. And as she and Oliver had tastes so identical, her influence over him was great.

All this was watched by Will Williams with a jealous eye. Oliver was aware of an ill-feeling on the part of the young fisherman; but he had a spice of southern haughtiness in his composition, and was disposed to look very carelessly, if not contemptuously, upon the claims of a fellow like him to Tangee's society or liking.

"Look-a-here! I'll be switched if this ain't right down selfish!" cried a loud voice, one day, just as the two were about to sit down on the sands to a pic-nic dinner in a tiny sheltered spot, where the sea ran in to a miniature bay.

They had kindled a fire of dry drift-wood, and boiled a ~~bag~~ which they had caught, while a pot of coffee was smoking close at hand. Oliver had a strong suspicion that they had been watched and followed, as, looking up at the sound, he saw Will in a boat, not a rod away. It hardly seemed chance which had brought him to that secluded part of the beach. The suspicion caused young Gifford's cheek to flush a dark red; but Tangee, who suspected nothing, answered cheerily:

"Then it is fortunate you happened along, Will. Will you

land, and take dinner with us?—there is enough for three, I'm sure."

"P'raps others wouldn't like to be intruded on," disagreeably

"Miss Tangee is the hostess; I am only the cook," said Oliver, determined to keep his temper, and not notice insinuations. "Whoever she invites is doubly welcome."

"How does Hardy Joe git along," asked the interloper, pulling to shore, and jumping out, "since you took a boarder, Tangee? Don't have time to tend to both, I reckon."

"Father went off by himself, to-day, to be gone till night; so we thought we'd enjoy our dinner on the beach. Come, Will, I've a basket of cookies under that bush, too. They're for dessert."

"Oh, how fine we be! And what's dessert?"

"Olla can tell you!" was her laughing reply.

"I don't care about bein' eddicated up to that kind o' flummery," was the rough remark. "And if I was to speak my mind, I'd say yer father better keep ye to home, than to let ye be runnin' about so much with a city chap as don't know what he does or don't want. He'll make right smart fun o' ye, when he gets back. I shouldn't wonder if he'd coax you to give him your picter, and p'raps that o' the Jolly Jack and Hardy Joe, to show 'round to his friends, and make game of."

"You know better than that!" said Oliver, in a low voice, but with all the fire of a hasty nature blazing in his eyes. "We have politely asked you to join us, and, in return, you insult us."

"I don't insult *her*!" was the sneering answer. "I like her too well—nor I don't mean to stand by and see others comin' it too strong. You'd better get up steam and paddle back to where you come from, or some of us boys may give you a duckin'."

"Oh, Will, you offend me as well as him," remonstrated the girl.

"Stand back, Tangee; he's too rude for you to speak with. I never permitted myself to be insulted twice," and with one bound, like that of the tiger of his native jungle, Oliver was upon his enemy, grasping him by the throat, and bearing him down.

Will was much the taller and larger ; but the East Indian was lithe and agile, with far more power than would be suspected by those who had not tried it. Tangee gave one little scream ; then she stood back, watching, with pale face, the progress of the encounter. So unexpected was his attack, that his insulter was not prepared, and Oliver had him down, his hand still tightening on his throat, while he slapped his face with the other.

"There ! treat a gentleman as you ought to," he cried, bounding to his feet before Will's strong arms could grasp him.

"Not by a long shot !" panted Will, struggling up, and rushing at his opponent. For some time Oliver parried the blows, for he was a skillful fencer ; but presently a powerful blow struck his temple, and he fell.

"I reckon he won't feel so plucky right away ag'in. He's got more muscle than I give him credit for. Sorry I sp'iled your dinner, Tangee," and Will leaped into his boat.

"Oh, Will, you have murdered him !"

"Like as not," he returned, with a blood-shot glance at the motionless form ; "he struck me in the face."

"Not until you did worse. Oh, Will, come back and see to him."

But the fisherman rowed swiftly away without another glance. There was murder in his heart, at that moment, whether he really were a murderer or not. Giving way, in the first place, to a mean impulse, which prompted him to follow and watch the pair ; then allowing himself to become angry at sight of their gayety, and to insult them when he had only received kindness from them, it was a consequence that his merited chastisement should arouse in him a fury which made him, for the time being, another Cain.

"Olla ! Olla !"

Tangee's voice was sharp with fear, but he did not heed it. She ran to the water with her little bucket, and coming back, sat down and took his head in her lap, bathing his face for several moments, before he gave any signs of life. At last he opened his eyes and stared at her, like one who awakens from sleep, and cannot recall his whereabouts.

"Oh, Olla, I thought you were dead !"—and then she burst

into a flood of tears, and fell to kissing him between her sobs.

"Has he gone?" he asked, when he had collected his scattered senses.

"Yes, Olla."

"Why didn't he stay, like a man, and give me a chance to fight it out? If I meet him again, one of us will be the worse."

"Don't think of him. He's a high-tempered, rude fellow, not worth your anger. Let him go. If he's taken that way to make me like him, he's been very unwise. Come, Oliver! you kicked the fish into a puddle, when you went over, but the coffee has stood the shock of battle. Let's have a cup."

Her laugh was a little hysterical, but it set her companion off, too. It *was* ridiculous to find their broiled bass back in his native element, and the rebound in her feelings, when she found Olla was not dead, was enough to shake her nerves. While the tears still rolled down her face, she was laughing in a fit of contagious merriment.

The young man's stomach was in a state resembling seasickness, from the shock his system had received; he had just as soon the fish would sail away of itself, and report bayadere stripes to be the fashion to all the bass on the coast, as not; but presently he took a little coffee, and found himself decidedly restored.

"Why don't you help yourself?" he asked, noticing that Tangee did not partake.

"Oh, I can not. I am so glad you are not killed, that my throat's all choked up. I can not swallow for the cramp in it."

"Little goose!" said the young man, smiling over at her, while his own lips quivered a little.

And then Tangee broke down again, flinging her arms about his neck and crying.

"That fellow was jealous," said Oliver, much moved by the sight of his companion's emotion; "I believe he's in love with you, sister."

"He told me as much, himself."

"But he needn't be, Tangee; he is not worthy of you. You're going to be a lady, Tangee; you must go to school, and accomplish yourself; and by-and-by, when we are both older,

"I shall marry you; so, little one, you must keep others away."

"You'll never marry me, Olla; Mr. Wetmore wouldn't allow it, nor your father."

"When I'm of age, I shall do as I please; only I should like you to be educated. Every body will be proud of you then. Do you love me, Tangee?—do you think you would like to marry me?"

"Yes," she said, simply, looking up into his eyes.

"Then we are what people call engaged, are we?"

"Just as you please, Olla."

"Well, I please to say we are engaged. Give me another cup of coffee, Tangee; I'm so happy it makes me hungry."

"Then I'll get you the cookies; they are very nice and rich; I baked them on purpose for our lunches."

He ate one cake after another, and sipped his coffee, while Tangee sat looking at him, with a face as bright and splendid as the sun. There was a great affection between the two, certainly; and in the excitement of seeing her crying about him, and having fought in her behalf, Oliver imagined, for the time, that he loved her with such love as would make him choose her for his future wife.

Whether this was the beginning of a real passion which his maturer years would justify, or only the fancy of a romantic boy, remained to be proven. When he left Katie Wetmore he had thought her more attractive than the brunette of the beach; but now, the enthusiasm of having defended Tangee had kindled all his feelings. Besides, that disagreeable fellow had said that he was doing the girl an injustice—and perhaps he was!

Yes, Tangee loved him! He saw it now in her paleness and tears; and since this was the case, and he had made her love him by being so much with her, had he not better try to forget Katie and "cleave only" to this warm-hearted, innocent girl who was so fond of him? It was with such good resolutions as these that he bolstered up his happiness during the first hours of his "engagement." Yet Oliver was as true of nature as he was ardent. It was only that he was still a boy, and while some delightful vision of his dreaming hours

always hovered about Katie, gratitude and sympathetic tastes led him to a great liking for the fisherman's dark-eyed daughter.

Those little cakes, which Tangee had baked for their luncheon, had an ambrosial flavor which made him fancy that he was taking a meal in the garden of Eden. When young lovers are out of their suspense, and are happy, they no longer refuse to be hungry; there is a delicious sweetness about dainties then which "Professor" Blot never could give.

When you come to mix passion and romance into goodies, in conjunction with extract of rose and essence of lemon, and frost them over with fancy as well as sugar, you get up a confection for which there is no receipt, but which, having once been tasted, leaves a luscious memory which lingers long.

Tangee ate a cake, too, after a while, when the flutter of her spirits had subsided a little. It tasted very delectably, but her greatest enjoyment consisted in watching Oliver partake of her cooking. When the coffee was all gone they drank a little nectar from each other's eyes; then they packed their cooking utensils in a basket, and, with a lingering look at the spot where their fate had been decided, floated off again into the sea, with not a care upon their minds except to get home before dark.

That is, there was no care, after Tangee had won a promise from her companion that he would not renew the quarrel with Will Williams, unless obliged to in self-defense.

That person was lingering about the beach in front of the Jolly Jack when the two returned home half an hour after sunset. The girl's heart stood still in fear of another collision; but Will walked off, when he saw them land, without further interference.

He had another plan of revenge in his brain which he immediately put into operation. He hung about until he saw Hardy Joe landing from his fishing-boat, when he overhauled him, and took the privilege of a friend in reminding him that Tangee had no mother, and that he, Joe, was not doing right in letting her run around so much with that city chap.

"That's so," said the old wrecker, scratching his head, and casting a reflective squint far out to sea; "the gal's got no mother, and she ~~is~~ getting quite a gal; but, Lord, she seems like a baby to me yet! Yer don't r'ally s'pose she's old enough to have notions o' metteromony, and sich like, do you, Will?"

"Yes, indeed, she's as full of fancies as the ocean is o' fish, and that young man will catch 'em all in his nets. Of course if he's goin' to marry her, it's all right; but I've a mind he won't remember her long when he gets back among his own sort; and then you'll have her getting as thin as a shad, and refusin' to look at those as *does* want her and is her equals."

"Oh, as to that," with a snort, "Tangee's a lady, and as good as the President's wife. She's good 'nuff for him; but I'll look to it, I'll look to it, and much obleeged to ye, Will! I reckon ye hain't nothin' but the gal's good in yer mind's eye—no axes of yer own to grind, hey?" and with a sly laugh, which shook silently the burly form in its jacket of pea-green flannel, the captain of the Jolly Jack swung homeward.

Will had not confessed how far his own jealousies had carried him, or he would probably have got a shaking from old Joe which would have caused the teeth to rattle in his head; and as the young couple concluded to say nothing about it, unless Will renewed his hostilities, he was not betrayed.

That evening, Joe took a longer and a stronger lug at his pipe than usual. His companions did not notice it, for they were absorbed in themselves; they wondered, however, what was "in the wind" when he sung out,

"Take in sail there, gal, and lay to for the night. I want to talk with Gifford about a whalin' voyage to the South Sea."

Tangee went off to her own room as bidden, while Oliver took a seat on the step beside his host. The young man had intended to speak of his engagement, and to ask the old fellow's consent, but now he waited to hear what the other had to say.

"I'll be swashed if I don't think I've swallowed a frog,"

said Joe, after hemming and hawing himself hoarse. "In course you know, Mr. Gifford, that that little gal, as is jist saying her prayers in her crib, hain't no mother—nor no father to speak on—for though I've had the privilege o' bringin' her up by hand, as you might say, I know I'm no great shakes of a parent to the likes o' her."

"I'm sure you've done all for her that your means permitted, and that she loves you as if you were really her father," observed Oliver, seeing that Joe paused and knocked the ashes out of his pipe against the very breast of the figure-head of the Jolly Jack.

"'Twas a desput storm, that un as you was wracked in," began Joe, shifting his tack; "we give up for lost more'n once, ourselves; but we didn't make no 'count o' our trouble, when we got *you* safe aboard."

"It was bravely done," remarked the young man.

"Yes, we wrackers don't get overly paid, considerin'; I don't 'spose a single chist o' that tea was smuggled by any of us, though I *have* s'pected old Sally Brown might a got one, for she's had a good many tea-drinkin's lately; but that ain't to the p'int, arter all. As I was sayin', my little gal hain't got no mother, and I ain't ekel to being a mother to her, and I hope I shan't have no reason to repent o' landin' the fish I did, the night o' the wrack."

"What's on your mind, Joe?" asked Oliver, dimly suspecting what was in tow, but not certain of it.

"Wal, thar, that's jest it, and I'm glad yer asked me," puffing away under the nose of the admiral, which, being gone, could no longer envy him the privilege. "Tangee is quite a big gal, as I was sayin'; she's got a lively fancy, that child has, and when she gets all the purty white sails spread, and bears away into the ocean o' love, I hope no storms won't make shipwrack o' her craft. Ef you should be around here much, Mr. Gifford, bein' different from the youngsters 'round about, she might tackle her fancies onto yer; she ain't no mate for a rich man, and if you think the same you'd best take care not to be too soft on her, or it might end in a shipwrecked heart, ye see!"

It was all out now, and Hardy Joe sat, stolidly staring at the ocean glimmering in the moonlight, but with a secret

trembling of his nerves to which he was quite unaccustomed.

"Dear me," said Oliver with a gay laugh, "I hope and pray that I shall never shipwreck Tangee's happiness, sir. I am going to marry her, with your permission, some day ; we talked about it this afternoon."

"Hallo !" cried the fisherman, dropping his pipe, which broke into ruins at his feet, "that's what's up, is it? All right, my boy ; I hope ye'll never have a tempest till ye cast anchor in heaven. A pretty cap'n and craft ye two 'll be, I vow. I've got to lose my little girl, have I, and sail the Jolly Jack all the rest of my days alone?"

"Not so, sir ; we will never give you up, and it will be years yet before Tangee and I think of setting out on a voyage. If I was going to live always with Uncle Wetmore, Tangee might not be just the bride for me ; but we're not so fashionable in Ceylon, and I'm sure my father will love her as much as I do. A year or two at some good school will make her all I require."

"Avast there !" cried his companion, with a suspicious movement of the back of his hand toward his eyes. He was not driving off Oliver, but gave this greeting to a tear which had forced its way at the thought of losing the light of his cabin. "I like salt water, but not in that shape."

"It will be so long before I claim her," said Oliver, seizing his rough hand ; and then, ashamed of his own emotion, he ran down to the beach, to walk awhile in the moonlight, while Hardy Joe "turned in" with a mixed sense of misery and delight.

In two or three days from then Oliver had returned to Mr. Wetmore's ; it having been first arranged that Tangee was to go away in September to a young ladies' seminary, some thirty or forty miles from the Inlet. The trunk which Tangee claimed and held as her drowned mother's contained a hundred pounds in British gold. This sum had never been touched, but kept for the emergencies of her grown-up years. It would suffice to keep her, with a little help from Joe, two years in school ; and to this use it was put, with the consent of all concerned.

Will Williams, conscious of having awakened Tangee's

dislike, went down to Massachusetts and shipped on a whaling-vessel for a long cruise. Tangee, full of the ambition to become the equal of Katie Wetmore, yet felt a heavy depression of spirits at parting with the ocean, the beach, and, hardest of all, with her adopted father. She knew that it could not be otherwise but that he would be lonely without her; but Olla wished her to go to school, and that decided the matter.

She made a good pupil, being especially apt in acquiring music, her slender brown fingers seeming to hold the secrets of harmony; but she had terrible seasons of home-sickness, when it seemed to her that she could not live unless she could fly back to the sea-side. For what did she pine most? For Olla's society? No! she loved the sea and all its influences and associations with a deeper love even than that felt for Oliver!

Her visit home at Christmas was a time of rejoicing in the village in general, and in the Jolly Jack in particular. Yet she did not once see Oliver. He was engaged, during the brief vacation, with Mr. Wetmore's festivities, and could not find time for a run down to Squall Inlet, in the rough winter weather.

Hardy Joe hired an old woman to keep house for him, and Tangee had nothing to do but look pretty, and divide her attentions between the beach and her father.

"If I get a big haul o' fish in the spring, we must have a pianer in the cabin of the Jolly Jack, so's I can smoke my pipe to the sound o' your purty playin'," said Joe, before she returned to school. "Lordy, I specs all the fishes will walk out on the dry land to hear you play, Tangee."

CHAPTER VI.

A PRETTY KETTLE OF FISH

THREE years and a half from the time when we saw Katie Wetmore kissing her father good-night, on the evening when the *Flying Cloud* went down, we will introduce her again.

She is not Katie now, but Kate, for the trio of years has changed the budding girl into the blooming woman. She is the mistress of Mr. Wetmore's household, and has a dignity even beyond her years. Eighteen is but a girlish age at which to assume the position of head of a wealthy and elegant establishment; but Miss Wetmore performed her duties with the gravity arising from a warm desire to please her father.

It was a warm July afternoon. The family were at their country place a little way back from the Hudson, and not far from a village and railroad station. Mr. Wetmore went down to the city, two or three days of the week, to look after his business affairs; he was gone this day, and Kate was on the porch, watching for the train which usually brought him out in time for the six o'clock dinner.

The white rose on the trellis was not fairer than she, as she paced slowly back and forth, the shadows of the vines playing over her as she walked. A little above the medium height, elegant in form and movement, with a slender waist and beautiful shoulders, her fleecy blue dress trailing about her with the grace which all she wore seemed to catch from her, the very lights and shadows seemed to play about her as if they loved her. Her braided hair shone like a coronet of gold, and her eyes were the color of the deep blue heaven into which she gazed, as, wearied with walking, she finally sat down on the upper step, with two or three roses in her hand, and fell into a musing mood which did not seem altogether a happy one.

Presently she heard the whistle of the train, and a soft flush

rose to her cheeks as she looked eagerly toward the village. Presently the carriage returned with her father, and when she saw, from a distance, that he was unaccompanied, the flush went down, and the tears rose to her eyes. She banished them before Mr. Wetmore reached the steps.

"What's the matter, Kate?" he asked, as he kissed her. "You look sad; have you no visitors to-day?"

"The last one went off after lunch, father; I've been quite alone this afternoon. But where is Oliver? I thought he was coming out with you."

"He had his carpet-sack at the store to-day. He said he must go down to the Jersey beach, and spend a few weeks with his friends there. By the way, Kate, I've half made up my mind that he is enamored of that girl, who first took care of him there. A piece of folly, if such is the case, out of which I must ridicule him. What will my friend Gifford say, after sending his boy to me, if I allow him to make such a *mesalliance* as that?"

"You know Oliver is terribly willful, papa. If he is in love with her, he will marry her despite your warnings; so I think you need say but little about it. He tells me she has been in school for two years, but is home again now. He has her picture; she is very beautiful, I think; I can see nothing vulgar in her as she appears in the picture. It is a very peculiar face. If it resembles any one, it resembles Oliver himself; the same flashing eye, the same delicate black line of eyebrow, and clear-cut features. No doubt she is of Oriental parentage. It's quite romantic, her history is, is it not? I would like to see her. I told Oliver to bring her on a visit, sometime, and he said he would."

Kate did not mean to sigh, but she did. Her father cast a sharp glance at her, and she turned away under his look. She was thinking that if ever Oliver brought that girl to visit them it would be as his bride.

Mr. Wetmore was not pleased with the cause of his daughter's sigh. She evidently was disappointed that he did not bring Oliver home, and he was annoyed, not only that his darling should be neglected by the young man, but that he should have entangled himself with a fancy, or perhaps an engagement, in a sphere so below his own.

"I'm afraid the boy's a fool," he said, a little angrily, as he passed into the house.

Oliver had been over a year in Mr. Wetmore's counting-house, winning "golden opinions" for his steadiness and industry, notwithstanding his natural indolence, and a certain fire of restlessness which blent with it. In society he was a great favorite, there being a grace in his manner unapproachable by scions of northern growth, and a brilliancy in his smile that was like a flash of light. That his father was an East Indian merchant of great wealth did not detract from his popularity. He would have been laid siege to by many very nice girls, had it not been generally understood that Miss Wetmore had claims upon him. His long visit was to terminate soon, he did not know how soon, as he was awaiting orders from his father, who had barely mentioned, in his last letter, that he might revisit his native land and carry his son back with him. If he concluded not to come, Oliver expected to be recalled very soon.

Although he had rooms in a boarding-house, his real home was with the Wetmores. When they were in the city he always dined with them and spent the evening, being as privileged as any other member of the family. He had been with them considerably since they went to the country; but had seemed inclined to stay away. Kate had noticed a coldness and reserve so little like his natural manner that she began to think she had seriously offended him.

Oliver never had told Kate of his engagement with the wrecker's daughter. Some inexplicable feeling always had prevented the confession. Kate never had suspected it until quite lately. When she did suspect it, it made her very unhappy. The suddenness and depth of that unhappiness revealed to her the state of her own affections.

She loved him, and he was indifferent to her.

Still she hoped against hope. Sometimes she would find Oliver's eyes resting upon her with an expression which made her heart throb; sometimes there was a faltering tenderness in his tone—or did she imagine it?

On this evening all her most jealous suspicions were confirmed. He had gone away to visit that girl without even telling her, the previous day, of his intention to be so long

absent. She would not have believed that *Mr. Gifford* could be so rude.

Pride came to Kate's rescue; it would be the last drop in the cup of her humiliation to have her father suspect her wretchedness. She presided at the dinner with more than her usual gayety; they had usually more or less company when in the country; but to-day every guest was absent, and Kate had to give all her attention to Mr. Wetmore, that she might hide, under a girlish playfulness, the true state of her feelings.

But when dinner was over, and he had strayed off to one of his neighbor's for a chat, she was left at liberty to take off her mask. Strolling out into the flower-garden, she seated herself on a rustic bench to watch the sunset. Tear after tear gathered and fell unheeded. Many conflicting emotions urged these tears. Shame that she had allowed herself to love one who was indifferent to her; jealousy of the wild, bright, beautiful creature—a waif thrown up by the sea—who, without friends, family or fortune, had won what was denied to her, Kate Wetmore, the belle of her circle. Despair, loneliness, all these miseries which young hearts will experience when disappointed in their first love, set the tears flowing and the lip quivering

“Kate!”

She had sat thus for some time, when she was startled by some one speaking her name, and looking up she gave a faint cry of surprise to find Oliver earnestly regarding her; her first impulse was to hide her face, but that would have been a tell-tale movement, and, striving to keep down the rising blush, she said,

“I thought you were on the way to the Jersey beach.”

“I would not leave without saying good-by; I do intend to start to-morrow, so ran out this evening to announce my departure. Not that I suppose any one will be particularly interested in my movements; but certainly your kindness deserves that much attention from me. I was coming out with your father but some small affair detained me, and caused me to miss the train.”

“You seem to have met your fate, when you were wrecked on that friendly shore, Oliver.”

She tried to steady her voice and to speak with playfulness, but there was a tremor in it despite of her. She did not look at him as she spoke, and did not see that his face was clouded.

"Yes," he answered, bitterly, "I did meet my fate, and it is not a happy one. I wish they had not saved my life. It is worthless to me; it would have been better if they had let me drown!"

Kate looked at him in astonishment; he was pale and agitated, his eyes falling before hers.

"Has Tangee refused you, Oliver?" was her first thought and question; and she could not help a thrill of joy quickening her own pulse, sorry as she felt for his trouble.

The young man walked up and down without answering. Two or three times he stopped before her, opening his lips to speak, but resuming his walk in silence.

"If you are in any trouble, cousin Oliver, why not share it with me?"

How low and sweet was her voice—how full of more than solicitude! She had put aside her own sorrow to comfort him in his.

He threw a passionate glance at her, as she sat there, the last rays of the sun kissing her hair and brow; she trembled beneath that glance, and yet she had not the key whereby to interpret it.

"You are the last person, Kate, to whom I could tell it."

"What do you mean?"

"Don't ask me; don't speak to me, Kate."

"But I am afraid you are not happy."

"And would that give *you* uneasiness?" he asked, adding, hastily, "don't answer me; I had no right to ask."

"Why not, cousin? Yes, it would render me—very miserable—to think you were so. I wish you to be happy, although I—I never expect to be."

When she began she did not mean to say this; and now that, with stammering and blushes, it was out, she hid her face in her hands.

"Kate!" cried Oliver, dropping on his knee, and catching one of her hands.

"Go away, please go away, Oliver. Do not think that I—

that it is any thing but the headache !” sobbed the young lady, ready to die of shame that she had betrayed so much feeling, and that he must see the cause of it.

“ I *can't* go away, Kate. I wish I had not come here to-night. If I had kept away from you, I might not have dishonored my own word. It is too late to keep back the truth. Kate, have you not seen, for a long time, that I had a great weight upon my heart ?”

“ I do not know, Oliver ; I supposed, of course, you must be happy. Are you and Tangee not engaged ?”

“ Yes, that is just it. Like an idiot, I engaged myself to her that first summer of our acquaintance. We were mere children ; I had not the slightest comprehension of what *love* was—love, Kate, such as I feel for you ! The love of a man for a woman—the love of a life, deep, strong, meaning all and every thing there is of me, intertwined with my hopes and ambitions—love that is all agony when it should be all bliss. Oh, Kate !”

He lowered his cold forehead on her hand ; her face was pale, and still it shone with the joy of hearing that, after all, he loved her. No matter what misery and separation was in store for them—he loved her !

Shame and jealousy died out, and with a faint smile she laid her other hand on his head, saying,

“ It matters not for any other grief, Oliver, since you say you love me.”

“ Oh what can we do ?” dropping her hand, and rising to his feet again. “ I meant to hide my passion deep in my own soul. If I had not seen you in tears, and guessed their source, I could not have been so overcome as to betray poor Tangee's cause. For the child loves me ; her childish affection has deepened into love, while mine still remains what it was at first—the quiet love of a brother for a dear sister. In a moment of excitement, when I had fought in her behalf, I told her that some day we should marry. Since then she has been to school, giving her every thought and aspiration to fitting herself to occupy the station to which she expects to be raised. Can I disappoint her ? Can I go to her, now, and say that I was mistaken in my feelings—that the heart of a boy is not that of a man—that I love another, and can not marry her ?

Would you advise me to do it, Kate? You are a pure, true-hearted woman—you can judge of the case. Tell me what to do, for my man's heart and art are powerless to fathom the true and right course to pursue!"

His voice was sharp; his eager, pleading eyes almost betrayed a hope that she would decide in favor of their own happiness, and against the claims of the humble wrecker's daughter, who was, doubtless, that very hour, gazing out at each white-winged vessel, looking for her lover. Kate paused a moment, her nervous fingers clasping each other tightly; her voice, though low, was quite firm, as she said:

"Be true to your promise, Oliver. We can afford to be less happy, when we are certain that we are trying to do right."

"Dear Kate, how noble you are! You will break my heart, to see what you are, and to know that I have lost you."

"Give my love to your Tangee, Oliver, and bring her to see me. I have no doubt I shall like her. And now, had you not better let me go in? I want you to be true to your future wife, in thought as well as in deed."

She arose, and they walked to the house together. Mr. Wetmore met them, as he came up the walk, and, detecting the agitation which they could not entirely conceal, concluded that the cherished wish of his heart was about to be consummated—that the pair were affianced.

He said nothing, waiting for Oliver to approach him on the subject. The next morning the two rode to town together. Oliver was off on his trip to Jersey; but he said nothing about marrying Kate, leaving Mr. Wetmore half inclined to be indignant, as he said good-by to him for a fortnight.

That night he asked Kate if it was fishing, alone, which brought the young gentleman to Squall Inlet, and she told him that Oliver was engaged to the wrecker's daughter.

"A pretty kettle of fish to be cooked up for his father's visit," cried the merchant, in a rage.

CHAPTER VII.

DRIFTING WITH THE UNDERTOW.

DURING those warm July weeks there had been another romance weaving down on the gray sands of the Jersey shore. Glitter of sunshine and glitter of waves, the fleecy clouds high up in heaven, the purple clusters of the morning-glories, the flash of a woman's eyes, the fibers of a young man's heart, were all woven into the web.

One day Tangee—who now always dressed with care, and who never ran barefooted except when, shyly, in the dawn-light or the moonlight, she stole out in her black-and-red bathing suit, for an hour's sport with her old playmate, the ocean—made herself preëminently beautiful. She was not expecting Oliver, as she knew that he did not intend visiting the beach until near the first of August. She had bade farewell to her school-days, and been home about two weeks, the pride and pleasure of the whole crew of fishermen round about, and the especial delight of old Joe, whom she had not learned to flout in the increase of her charms and accomplishments.

On this particular day, Tangee, having nothing else to do, dressed herself in a soft, fleecy white dress, and gathering a lap-full of morning-glories, which had opened afresh as the day began to decline, she wove a wreath for her black hair. Then, noticing that a cool air had set in from the ocean, she took a book and ran down to the beach, where she seated herself in a favorite spot, quite close to the water, hidden from the world by a bit of wreck and a copse that sprung up around its protecting shelter—a kind of torquoise set in the gray bracelet of the sands. She liked it here, because she seemed so entirely alone with the sea, the heaven, and her own thoughts. Not that she had any thing in particular to think of. She felt well and contented. Oliver was coming; the Jolly Jack and its freedom was delicious after the thralldom of school, the weather was pleasant, and she was free

from care. But she loved to dream idly in this mighty solitude, letting her fancies flow and ebb with the sea.

With the water rolling in, and breaking almost at her feet, she sat there, holding the volume open in her lap, her white dress falling about her as if one of the sky's fleecy clouds had settled around her, and her black hair borrowing a more intense blackness from the light thrown through the purple flowers which wreathed it.

All unconscious was Tangee of her own graceful attitude and appearance. Unobserved, she thought nothing of herself, but after drinking in the cool breeze from the salt water and watching the sunset clouds brighten, her eyes fell on her book, and soon she was completely absorbed in the melodious woes of the "Lady Shalott," read many times before, yet beautiful as ever in its freshness. In a clear voice, which had been trained to exquisite expression, she read aloud :

"From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the chrystal mirror,
'Lizza, Lizza,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot."

Pausing a moment to run her glance over the stanza again, a mellow voice took up the burden, so near her that it seemed in her very ear.

"She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot."

At the first word Tangee's startled glance met that of a stranger—a young man in a skiff, who, rowing idly along, had discovered the beautiful girl in her retreat, and had drifted silently near, having been gazing at her unobserved for the last five minutes. What audacious impulse was it which prompted him to take up the strain, and carry it along? He could not tell. He was frightened at his own temerity, but carried the quotation briefly through; then, lifting his straw hat with a respectful gallantry, with a half-smile he resumed

his oars and pulled away into the rippling wake of purple and gold which the sunset left.

She had never seen him before—knew not whence he came or whither he was going. He seemed to have come out of the setting sun and to have been withdrawn into it again. It might be Sir Lancelot himself, for all she knew. Yet he wore no helmet and no feather; and his curls, instead of being “coal-black,” were a rich brown, that was auburn in the light. If he gave a knightly impression of manly beauty and gallantry, it must have been in his demeanor, for his attire, now that she recalled it, was a summer suit of white linen, and his handsome face had smiled at her beneath a broad-brimmed Panama. Blue eyes, dazzling with light and laughter, a voice sweet and deep—that was all she could recollect; and yet he had impressed her as being, altogether, the most perfect man she had ever seen. Feeling like one who has seen a vision, she arose and went home. That night she dreamed of helmets and “gemmy bridles,” knights, dancing plumes and murmuring waves.

Hardy Joe had kept his promise about the piano.

Tangee's sleeping-room was now out in the “attic” of the after-cabin—a further extension of that queer habitation—the sea-suggesting berth in the main room was torn from its place to make space for the wonderful instrument about which the 'long shore dwellers flocked for weeks, as they would have flocked to see any other “lion.” When Oliver came it was expected that he would hang up a hammock for his nightly repose. In front of the piano was a very handsome rug, but the rest of the floor was still scoured and sanded.

With the doors wide open to admit the breeze, Tangee was practicing, the next morning, when a shadow fell across the floor, simultaneously with a knock upon the door.

Turning to see who came, she met the blue eyes of her knight. If she blushed slightly, he did the same.

“I was told that—Mr. Van Horn had fishing-tackle to let, and boats. He lives here, does he not?”

“I suppose he does, sir, though we hardly know him by that name. He is always ‘Hardy Joe’ or ‘Cap’n.’ Will you walk in till I speak to my father about it? He is in the back yard, I believe, making ready now for a day's fishing.”

"Thank you, I will come in, if you will permit. I am not very strong, and the doctors have sent me down here to form an intimate friendship with all out-doors. I shall like it immensely if your father (did you say ?) will take me out with him. I am a perfect ignoramus in the glorious science of catching fish, either by rod, spear, net or harpoon. I could no more catch a trout than a whale. Yet I've read old Isaack Walton three times. If he will take me as a pupil, money shall not part us ; he may make his own terms."

"He will not be avaricious," said the young girl, as she gave him a chair, and went out to call old Joe.

The stranger took this opportunity to cast a curious glance about the cabin of the Jolly Jack.

"Good heavens ! she calls that man her father, and does not seem ashamed of him, either ! I thought, when I saw her on the beach last evening, that she must belong to some party of city pleasure-seekers, who were down here for the novelty of the thing. Of all the strange combinations I ever saw, this surpasses them. I've been longing for a new sensation, and here it is. Of all things quaint, this cabin is the quaintest—of all things beautiful, that girl is the most beautiful. I wish the doctor could see me now !"

His thoughts being interrupted by the return of the young lady with her father, he arose from his chair and bowed politely to the old fisherman, who, queer and rough as he was was not a man to be laughed at.

"Mr. Van Horn ?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"My name is Arthur Wade. I've been studying a little too hard, and my physician sent me down here to fish, row, and bathe. He said if I went to Newport I would sit up too late of nights ; and, as I'm heartily tired of such places, I agreed with him. I told him I wanted something *new*, and he directed me to look for it in a few weeks spent among the people of the beach. I am certain, already, that I shall be charmed," with a glance at the young girl.

"We do have city folks down here, once and a while, Mr. Wade. Great fools they be, too, most on 'em. Don't know a blue-fish from a bass. Don't know when thar's a storm a-brewin', or when it's only make-believe."

"I'm afraid I shall prove to be a very great fool indeed, sir. But I am anxious to take lessons; and, from what I've heard, I might go far and near without finding another such teacher as Hardy Joe."

This little breeze of flattery rippled Joe's face with a sarcastic smile.

"They do say I was born with a fish-hook in my hand. I can tell you, thar ain't been many days, for the last sixty year, that I hain't been on that water. I made a few voyages, in my younger days, when I was master of a little schooner, the Jolly Jack, arter which I've named my place, sir. But she went down in a storm, and I lost her; so I took to land-life again, if you might call it so, which is half-and-half, like a tumbler o' grog. I've been out with my surf-boat to thirty wracks—I've saved a good many lives, picked up a lot o' floatin' property, helped unload a sight o' beached ships—but of all the work I ever did, I never done nothin' that paid me so well as when I brought that 'ere baby to land, out of the awfulest tempest that ever blew on this coast, sir, a little over sixteen year ago."

The wrecker indicated Tangee with a wave of his hand, who looked up with a smile, from the sheet of music with which she had appeared to be engrossed.

"Then she is an adopted daughter, sir?"

"Aye! I reckon. You don't s'pose they grew that kind on the Jersey shore? I tell her she's an Injun. That brown skin and them black eyes don't belong to us."

"It would be hard to tell where they came from," answered the young gentleman, withdrawing his eyes lest she should consider him rude in his regards. "I've been in Spain and Italy, but I never saw just such features and complexion. I guess the ship which bore her must have sailed from some port of Paradise."

"Father, didn't you promise me you would not talk of me, in my presence?"

"Ha! I've got to conceal my admiration from this spirited beauty. She is not ignorant of the proprieties, as I might know," thought the stranger, adding aloud, "I beg your pardon, mademoiselle, but I truly thought that, last evening, when I chanced to see you, so unexpectedly, when I was only looking

for some fisherman in a pea-jacket, I solemnly declare I thought myself in a dream, or I should not have been so bold as to add my chorus to your song. If I was impertinent, I am glad of this opportunity for begging your pardon."

"Let it go," said Tangee, with a smile, "the spirit who addressed me came up out of the sunset and returned into it again. I refuse to recognize any personality about him."

"What ye talkin' about? Did ye ever see this chap afore, Tangee?"

"He passed me, in a skiff, last evening."

"Aye, aye! Well, what can I do for you this mornin', sir?"

"I'd like you to provide me with a boat, fishing-tackle, and your good company. I am willing to pay liberally for your time and services."

"All right; I'm at yer service, sir. Where be you stoppin'?"

"At the tavern. I only arrived yesterday; I came in a schooner from New York."

"How do ye like yer quarters?"

"Rather dirty, rather noisy in the evening, and wretched cooking; but the doctor told me that when I had been here a few days I should be hungry enough to eat boiled seaweed."

"Wal, I reckon we'd better be off; I'm ready if you are. Have you any objections to carryin' a bucket-full o' bait? I've got a lot of other traps, and I'll be obleeged to ye to tackle the bucket."

"All right," said the stranger, laughing, and with a parting bow to the young mistress of the Jolly Jack, he followed his captain out through the cook's quarters, to the rear, where he picked up the bucket and marched off with it, talking gayly with the old fisherman.

We are afraid that Tangee peeped after them with a good deal of interest.

That afternoon, when Joe returned, he was in excellent spirits. The young gentleman had provided a lunch of crackers and ale, and they had pulled ashore to dress and boil a fish, on the sands; he had been paid five dollars and allowed to retain all the fish.

"A good day's work," said Joe, as he attacked his supper vigorously ; " I'd like to keep it up all the season. He's a master hand to talk, too. Why I told him nearly all the wracks I was ever engaged in."

"Then I think it must have been *you* who did the talking, father," said Tangee, merrily.

"That's so," exclaimed Joe, looking up as the truth forced itself upon his mind. "I did tell a sight o' stories; but he drawed 'em out o' me so easily, I had a notion it was him who was so sociable."

"You'd better make him tell the stories to-morrow, father. I would not let him be too inquisitive."

"Oh, he warn't curious; but he said he'd a great fancy for sea-stories, and the like; and as I liked to tell 'em, as well as he did to hear 'em, I reckon we had a good time. He *did* get out of me a great deal about you, puss."

"Impertinent!" pouted the young lady.

"I told him the circumstances of the wrack, and how I'd brought you up by hand without no mother, and how good a little gal you was, and not ashamed o' the old wracker."

"Did you tell him I was engaged?" asked Tangee, in a low voice.

"Wal, no, I didn't know as you'd like to have it mentioned, Tangee."

"That's right, father; I *don't* want it spoken of yet awhile, not until Oliver and I begin to think of getting married, which will be years yet."

"Just as you say; I'm shut up like an oyster on that subject, if you like," responded her father. "The longer you put it off the better for this old hulk!"

Why did Tangee feel relieved when assured he had not told the stranger of her engagement? If she had stopped to think she could not have told. As there was no talk of immediate marriage between her and Oliver, it was desirable not to have too much said about them publicly; still, that was not the instinct of prudence which prompted her; neither was it, simply, an impulse of modesty, to hide her love and betrothal in her own breast. She could not have given a reason had she been asked.

"How'd ye like to take a boarder, gal?"

"Who?"

"Mr. Wade, in course. He hinted around purty strong; but I tol' him it woul' be jest as *you* said 'bout that. He complained o' the folks to the 'Three Mariners' being rather dirty, which is a fact; he said he noticed how neat our little kitchen was."

"You must do just as you please about it, father."

"I'd like well 'nough to take him, ef it's agreeable to the wimmen folks. He'd pay a good price; and the fact is, I'm owing fifty dollars yit on the pianer."

"Oh, father, take him, then, by all means; but where *can* he sleep?"

"In the hammock, or on the floor, this warm weather, till Oliver comes. I told him we had no spare bed, but plenty o' vittals. He said he'd sleep on the settee. You didn't forgit how to bake them nice fol-de-rols when you was to the seminary, did ye, Tangee?"

"I guess I can recall my skill. Sally is excellent at chickens and fish, and I think I can keep up the supply of small things."

"He said he didn't want no delikisays."

"Men always *say* that; but they generally enjoy them when they are provided. Did he say what he was ill with? He looks well enough."

"He said thar was nothin' partic'lar the matter with him, but want o' exercise, and reading too much. He said his father was a lawyer, and he was studyin' in his office."

Scarcely was the supper disposed of before Mr. Wade again presented himself at the Jolly Jack, to ascertain the decision with regard to boarding. He evidently was greatly pleased when informed that it was in the affirmative. He had with him a couple of the latest magazines which he said he had read on the voyage hither and in his room the previous evening, and he now offered them to Miss Van Horn, who was glad to accept them. Perhaps she had something to lend him in return? It was fearfully dull at the "Three Mariners;" he should have to go to bed for the want of something to do.

Tangee presumed he was familiar with the few books which constituted her store. Still he lingered, chatting in an easy,

agreeable way. Presently he asked if she would play something for him. He went to the piano to turn the leaves for her, and she played, for some time, such pieces as he selected. Then, would she sing?

Tangee had just such a voice as one might expect from looking at her—rich and full, with a dulcet softness that made it a happy medium for expressing sentiment and passion. In one or two of the songs Mr. Wade joined; his voice, replete with strength and melody, bore hers along, two golden streams flowing together in sunshine.

Tangee enjoyed it very much. Oliver did not sing, did not understand music, or care much for it; but this stranger, she could see, knew more about it than herself. When she finally reflected that it must be late, and looked around at the cabin clock, it pointed to eleven. Hardy Joe, albeit fond of hearing “sweet sounds,” whose meaning he could not analyze, and very proud of his daughter’s playing, was fast asleep on the settee.

“I am disobeying orders,” said Mr. Wade, as he followed her glance; “I was condemned to my pillow regularly at ten. I have spent a delightful evening, Miss Van Horn, quite in contrast with yesterday’s. May I come to breakfast in the morning?”

Tangee gave consent, and he said good-night.

Mr. Wade, the next morning, as he sat at the little round table, in the cool fore-cabin, looking through the open door directly at the glowing sapphire ocean, with Tangee passing excellent coffee, and Hardy Joe helping him to fresh fish and new-laid eggs, inwardly reflected that it was not bad to take, like many doctors’ prescriptions, and congratulated himself on being a lucky fellow.

“I have stumbled unexpectedly upon perfect felicity,” thought he. “Was ever any thing so quaintly delightful? I wish my friends at Newport and Long Branch, who were so vexed because I refused to join them, would take a peep at me now. I promised to return to Long Branch for a day or two; but I don’t believe I shall be disposed to spare the time.”

It was not so very awkward to have a boarder in their close quarters as Tangee feared it would be. He made himself

perfectly at home, and was satisfied with every thing. And as he took himself off with her father for the greater part of the day, she could "tidy up" the rooms, and prepare dessert for the evening meal, without discomfort.

That evening, as there was a full moon, and the weather was very warm, a bathing frolic was proposed. Tangee sent for several others, as she did not care to go in alone with her father and Mr. Wade. By the time she had donned her sea-costume, there were a dozen young people ready to join them, and a glorious time they had in the silvery waves, with the cloudless heavens smiling down on them, turning the spray into showers of diamonds. Tangee, in the water, was a water-witch—an elfish creature, with long black locks and flashing eyes, floating with folded arms upon the bosom of the sea, diving beneath the glittering surface, until once Mr. Wade thought her surely "sunk, to rise no more." He was about to cry out, when she emerged, close at his side, the moon shining down on her rosy cheeks and glimmering locks, her black eyes full of laughter, herself a creature so beautiful, yet so weird and unearthly in the moonlight, that he began to dream himself enchanted.

"I don't believe you ever had a real flesh and blood parentage," he said, as she floated about him. "Venus was your mother, and some one of the sea-gods your father."

"So be it," she replied, merrily. "Such an origin will do, if I *must* be accounted for. It's a fine thing not to be troubled with ancestors." Yet, lightly as she spoke, her words were followed by a sigh.

She was greatly attached to Hardy Joe, yet felt and knew, especially since she had mingled with the more refined world beyond her, as she had in school, that she would have loved her own parents with a deeper intensity. It *was* sad to have no friends or family but that one old man. In this momentary depression Tangee forgot all about Oliver. She was wondering what Mr. Wade thought of her friendless and fortuneless condition—if he was one of those aristocrats who respected no qualities of mind or heart, unless accompanied by a brilliant social position.

Then it occurred to her that, even were this so, she had a claim upon his respect, in being the promised wife of a young

gentleman whose family was old enough for two, and whose father was richer than Mr. Wade's, in all probability, ever had been or would be. But this was hardly the comfort to her which it should have been. The other young people in the water were coarse and wild enough; but they behaved with no special impropriety; they were the neighbors with whom she had been brought up, yet with whom she had never assimilated; good-natured and well-meaning, but rude as the elements from which they drew their support.

After a half hour in the water, Tangee invited them all up to the cabin, promising cakes and music. She did not like them to be jealous of her, and had the tact to keep their goodwill without being intimate with them. The young people gathered about the door, and on the steps, in their dripping garments, laughing and making merry at their odd costumes. Tangee was quickly redressed and gave them a dozen of her liveliest polkas and quadrilles, with two or three songs. She was surprised and delighted when Mr. Wade produced a flute, and accompanied her. The listeners were in ecstasies of admiration. The "concert" being over, "refreshments" followed, composed of what Joe called her *flummeries*, and the rough, rollicking company departed in the best of spirits.

"Really, Miss Tangee, if I may call you so, our impromptu party was a grand success! I am glad of the opportunity I have enjoyed of making the acquaintance of the élite of the beach."

"If I am to be rewarded by sarcasms for my attempts to entertain you, Mr. Wade, I will make no more."

"That threat would wither me into complete silence. But you do not give me credit for plain speaking. I was not sarcastic. I tell you truly, I never enjoyed an evening more in my life."

"Then, of course, it was the novelty of the affair."

"That was one of its charms; I shall not tell you the other."

"Why?"

"Because I'm growing afraid of you. You will send me to bed in disgrace, because I speak what I really think."

"I did not know that plain speech was a fault to which worldly people were addicted."

"And am I a worldly person?"

"I mean people of society."

"Because we think it pleasant to tell pleasant, and keep in the background unpleasant truths, are we, therefore, to be condemned? If one of those fisher-boys should come in and swear, to your face, that you were the handsomest, and best, and strangest, and most bewitching, and in every way most enchanting——"

"Nonsense!" cried Tangee, catching up her lamp, and disappearing, leaving the conclusion of his speech unspoken.

The next day there was no lack of variety in the entertainment provided for the boarder. He did not go out fishing, but had a long stroll on the beach, alone, coming back in time for lunch. In the afternoon, Tangee went with him in a skiff, for a little excursion. He took with him his flute, to try its power on the water. That evening they had a concert, followed by a half hour's spent in promenading the beach.

Really, the doctor's orders about "early to bed" were seldom followed. Those cool, delicious nights, and that sweet company, were too enchanting to be abandoned for stupid sleep. Packages of papers and books also came to hand, so that rainy days were full of employment.

Once Tangee and the boarder were caught, quite a distance from the shore, in a sudden thunder-storm. For a few moments it blew terribly. Mr. Wade was as pale as death, and clung to her hand.

"Don't be alarmed" she laughed, as the water dashed in their very faces, and the skiff rose and fell frightfully. "The wind is landward, and we can swim ashore if we are capsized."

"I'm not afraid for myself, but for you. Could you swim ashore, do you think, in case of accident?"

"I could keep afloat, and let the waves carry me in, and support you, too, if necessary."

Happily it was not necessary; the wind and rain subsided as rapidly as they rose. The color came back to the young gentleman's face, and he breathed freely once more.

"You were afraid," said the young girl, tauntingly.

"It was for you that I feared; it was terrible to me to see you in danger."

She laughed incredulously.

He blushed fiery red under her pretended scorn.

"I am not so very cowardly, Miss Tangee. I will jump overboard and swim ashore, now, if you think so."

"Oh, don't, Mr Wade! I did not accuse you of cowardice."

"I'm afraid you will take cold. You are perfectly drenched."

"When you make me take cold by wetting me, it will be when I've ceased to be the sea nymph which you have been pleased to call me."

"But the rain is not like the salt water."

"If I were a bale of silk, or a cask of sugar, you might be uneasy."

"Sugar is a vulgar invention, Miss Tangee; you are sweetness in the concrete, but of so dainty a nature that the very mention of sugar 'is commonplace, and not to be endured'?"

"I am glad we are almost home, Mr. Wade. You usually take advantage of the limited sphere of a small-boat to inflict upon me your practice."

"Practice?"

"Yes! I take it for granted that you are preparing for a winter's siege of some city belle, and are making me a target to practice your small fire of compliments, etc., upon."

"Miss Tangee, is it possible?"

"Yes; and here comes father, in a skiff, looking for us. He is afraid we were lost in the squall. I shall get in his boat and go home with him, so as to be out of reach of your missiles."

"Old Joe was considerably relieved when he saw the couple safe. He rowed along-side, in answer to Tangee's request, but the waves were still tossing angrily, and she was obliged to keep to her companion."

The drenching did not harm the young lady, but it gave Mr. Wade a slight sore throat. He could not sing for a day or two, and Tangee had to make him some hoarhound syrup.

It may be imagined that the days were neither long nor

wearisome. Mr. Wade forgot all about his promise to run up to Long Branch. If any fair friends awaited him there, they waited in vain. His appetite, at first rather delicate, increased every day, until he could do full justice to the simple but excellent bill-of-fare. His white hands grew brown, and there came a fresh color to his face. There never was a gayer, or better-tempered, or more easily-satisfied gentleman. Everybody liked him ; old Joe's mouth was full of his praises. If Oliver Gifford could have known how thoroughly Tangee was enjoying herself, he might not have been in such haste to perform an unwilling duty in making his long-delayed visit.

In all this time, Mr Wade heard but a casual mention of Oliver. Nothing to excite his curiosity or his jealousy, if, indeed, he felt interest enough to be jealous. He had not the slightest idea that this beautiful flower of the Jersey sands, which he believed himself to be the first to discover and appreciate, already was appropriated. What his own thoughts or expectations were, perhaps he himself could not have told. He had abandoned himself to the delights of the hour, without reflecting upon the future. He was proud, and his family were proud ; he admired this innocent and most beautiful girl exceedingly, but he had no intention of asking her to become his wife. It would be a most ridiculous thing, truly, for Arthur Wade, junior, to transfer this exquisite sea-flower into the fashionable atmosphere of upper New York.

Three weeks he had boarded at the Jolly Jack, when, coming back from a fishing excursion with Hardy Joe, he discovered another passenger in the cabin ; a young gentleman as good-looking, as well-bred as himself, and evidently quite as much at home !

There sat Tangee by his side, dressed in her prettiest, all in a glow of brilliant excitement. When he came in she blushed deeply, and with much gravity introduced Mr. Gifford to him. If a thunderbolt had shaken his nerves, Mr. Wade could not have been more disconcerted.

CHAPTER VIII.

A REVELATION.

A "CHANGE had come over the spirit" of the Jolly Jack. No beauty was ever followed by, and received the undivided attentions of two more agreeable young gentlemen than Tangee with her two guests. Yet there was an air of constraint over all things; the attempts at gayety were *attempts*, and not realities. Blunders were continually committed, in their efforts to be considerate of each other; and not to betray the least rivalry, the gentlemen were painfully polite. Between the two, Tangee was driven to distraction. At last, she relapsed into a deep melancholy, so different from her natural sunny moods as to attract the notice even of old Joe, who was "afscared she was sittin' up too late o' nights, or stickin' too clus' to the pianer."

After a week of this kind of enjoyment, things became intolerable. Mr. Wade said "good-by," one day, in the abruptest manner, taking his flute and himself off to Long Branch, without any hint of ever returning.

"I'm dreflle sorry to see you go," said Hardy Joe, as he shook hands; but Tangee did not say even that much.

She gave him her hand a moment, which was cold and nerveless, and said, simply, "farewell," without raising her eyes to his face. She was glad that Oliver followed him out, and down to the schooner, for she was certain that otherwise she would have betrayed her agitation.

When Oliver returned she had summoned back her roses, and was apparently in one of her most playful moods; but he was silent and gloomy. She had noticed, the first day of his arrival, how thin and pale he was, with a certain listlessness about all he did and said. Once she would have been quick to read the cause of his continued sadness; but now her own guilty conscience hid the truth from her; she fancied him about to be attacked with illness, and redoubled her gentle attentions, that he might not discover how cold and reluctant

her own feelings had become. Certain that she had allowed her preference for the stranger to be perceived, she endeavored to do away with the impression by every sisterly care of Oliver's health and happiness. Yet it was seldom that she could arouse him to any thing like his old spirits, and she blamed herself bitterly for his suffering.

"Tangee," he said to her, one day, "if my father sends for me, this fall, will you be ready to go home with me?"

"Certainly, Oliver," she said, earnestly.

She did not blush, or fall into the sweet confusion of a conscious girl. She was only too eager to conceal from him the sharp pang which ran through her heart, as he asked the question. And when Oliver sighed, as he kissed her hand, and walked silently away without further talk, she accused herself, after all, of not having been kind enough.

"Tangee," he said, coming back to her, "Kate wishes you to visit her; she sent you a cordial invitation. You can make your preparations, and purchase your outfit while with her. Kate has exquisite taste."

Tangee glanced up quickly. Something in the tone awoke a suspicion which had never before touched her. His eyes fell before the sudden, searching look, and again he turned away, leaving her to muse on a thought perfectly new to her. The secret trouble under which he was about to fall ill appeared to her in a new light. It was not that he was jealous of Arthur Wade. Was it not that he, too, had mistaken the nature of the feeling which had prompted him, when a mere boy, to engage himself to her? Did he regret it, yet feel himself in honor bound to fulfill his engagement?

She resolved to watch him closely, and to make up her mind.

The light and color which came to her face, with the very hope, was interpreted by Oliver to mean joy at the prospect of their speedy marriage.

After luncheon, of that same day, he said to her.

"You once told me, Tangee, that your mother's trunk contained a number of dresses, which would form a portion of your bridal outfit. Of course they will require to be made over. Suppose we look at them; I have a great curiosity to examine them. I want you to understand, Tangee, that you

are to call on me freely for all the money you need. You must have every thing handsome and appropriate, for you know there is no lack of means."

"Thank you, Oliver. Yes, let us examine the trunk. I have always meant to show you its contents. They need some attention, too, as I have not looked at them since I came home. Get Sally to help you bring it in, and we will open it here."

The package was soon placed on the floor of the sitting-room, and the two young people knelt beside it. It was a stout and very secure black-leather trunk, mouldy upon the outside. The supposition had been that it was but a part of the baggage of Tangee's mother, there being no letters or papers, and none of the child's wardrobe in it.

Tangee had the key, which she produced, and, unlocking it, she lifted the lid; but, before she had touched one of the garments folded therein, she burst into tears. It always affected her deeply to behold those sole mementoes of a nameless parent. From them she had been able to conjure up a vision of a young and beautiful mother, slight and elegant of form; and the vision had become so real, from much dwelling upon it, that it was difficult for her to believe but that she truly remembered her. Every time she opened the trunk, that tragic fate of the poor young creature rushed over her with a power that brought forth tears.

She wept a few moments, Oliver pressing her hand in silent sympathy. Then she took out the dresses, one by one, old-fashioned in make, but of the richest materials. Several of them were of the finest linen-cambric, delicately embroidered, and others of tissue and crape, seeming fitted to a tropical climate. Then there were brocades and satins of the most costly patterns. Some were spotted with the salt-water—others had escaped, as the trunk had been cast ashore before it had been many hours exposed. There were a couple of fans, a sandal-wood box containing some ribbons and laces, with a bracelet of strung-pearls of considerable value, and a shawl.

"These are all East Indian goods," said Oliver, when he had attentively examined them. "My father deals in all of them. This is a real cashmere shawl, very valuable; I have,

in my room at home, a sandal-wood box, the twin of this. Not any of those things are of French or English manufacture. The ship must have sailed from some East Indian port, and your mother, Tangee, was probably a native of the Orient. Your eyes and features are Singhalese, and the fact that your complexion is a few shades less brown may be accounted for by the probability of your father having been an European or an American. I conjecture that he was bringing his foreign wife home, when they encountered the fatal storm. These are Ceylon pearls, I know."

Tangee twined the gleaming strings about her arms.

"It is sad to be situated as I am," she said.

"You will soon have a father, and he will love you, I'm sure," returned Oliver, touched by her melancholy. "Is it possible that there is no scrap of writing, no picture, no lettering on the trunk, to afford the slightest clue?"

He obtained a piece of paper and rubbed the mould from the outside, carefully examining it. Upon one end he found, nearly obliterated, some initials.

"Look at these, Tangee," he said; "unless my eyes deceive me, I make them out to be 'O. G.'"

"Why, those are your initials, Oliver. But that is certainly what those are! O. G.! A strange coincidence, is it not?"

"It may be more than a coincidence," he replied, in a whisper.

The blood rushed to his face and receded; he got up and went for a glass of water. A dim, an almost vanished memory of the past, had suddenly blazed out in every line and tint, with a wonderful fullness of meaning, like invisible writing exposed to the heart which brings out its characters. Still, he might be utterly mistaken, and the picture in his memory was but one of a series; he could not recall enough to make the story plain or credible.

Coming back, he began again to examine the trunk. There was a place where the lining was loose from the body, having apparently become so from being wet. He tore this piece of lining away, and a letter dropped out, yellow with age.

Tangee seized upon it with a cry. Her hands trembled so that she could hardly hold it. What might it not reveal?

“ Oh, Olla, look at it ! I can not make it out, I tremble so !”

He took it, and glancing at the wrapper, cried :

“ This is my father’s handwriting !”—then, after a moment, “ and this is my mother’s maiden name !”

Tearing it open, he scanned the date, and rapidly perused its contents. The ink had faded so as to be scarcely legible, but he made out to understand the most of it.

“ It is,” said he, “ a love-letter written to my mother by my father, just before their marriage. But as my mother died and was buried on American soil, and my father did not sail for Ceylon until after her death, I do not see how this makes your parentage more clear. This letter has strayed into that spot by chance ; but its presence there, and those initials on the trunk, prove it to have been once my father’s. Tangee, there is a mystery ! I believe that I comprehend it, but I have not the proofs, and do not like to avow it until I get them. I shall write to my father, this day. But, oh ! how can I wait so many months for his answer ? I only hope and pray that he may now be on his way to America.”

“ What is this ?” asked Tangee, pulling the lining farther away. Another slip of paper dropped out. This was dated five years later than the letter, and about twelve weeks before the day of the shipwreck from which Tangee had been saved. *It was an order, on a Philadelphia banker, to pay to Mrs. Oliver Gifford one thousand dollars on demand, and was signed by Oliver Gifford, Trinconale, Ceylon !*

The young man looked up, his face glowing, smiles and tears both in his eyes.

“ Tangee, I solemnly believe that you are my half-sister ! This paper warrants the truth of my first suspicion.”

“ Your sister, Olla !” She spoke like one in a dream.

“ Yes, my dear sister, as I used to call you. Was it by instinct ? Tangee, tell me, how do you like the relation ?” regarding her anxiously.

“ I thank God for it, Olla !” she cried, bursting into tears and laughter, as she flung herself on his shoulder.

For a few moments they embraced each other in silence ; then she turned up his chin with her dimpled finger, and said, roguishly :

How do *you* like it, Olla?"

He blushed and laughed, answering, after an instant's hesitation:

"It would be very pleasant, little sister."

"Well, now that we know each other's minds, it will not matter so much whether your suspicions are correct or not. We shall never again be in danger of imagining that we should like to *marry* each other. Ah, Olla, Kate has exquisite taste!"

"Could you be jealous about a trifle like that?"

"No; but—

‘There are looks and tones that dart
A sudden *meaning* through the heart.’

You betrayed yourself in the manner, not in the words."

"I can tell you, Tangee, Kate Wetmore is a glorious girl. She is fit to be your sister."

"In-law?"

"Have it so, if it pleases you, Tangee; but, one thing you must promise me—to get leave of absence of our good ‘Cap’n’ Joe, and return with me to make her that promised visit. We can start to-morrow."

"You are in great haste, brother Olla, I perceive," teasingly.

"I should like to know if there were any letters from my father."

"Oh!"

Both were silent for a space. His thoughts had flown from the trunk, from his new-found sister, from every thing but Kate. He longed to fly, that moment, to her presence, to tell her that he was free to avow his love, to cherish it and be happy under it, instead of struggling continually against it.

Her thoughts were busy, striving to undo the riddle of her life.

"Olla," she presently asked, "why do you think it possible that I can be your sister? Did your father ever marry a second time?"

"I never knew that he did; but I now recall circumstances which convince me of it."

"It is very strange."

“It is strange, Tangee; but my father is a strange man. He has a strong will, a certain kind of obstinate pride, and yet passionate, even foolish, fancies and impulses which run counter to his pride, and cause him to do very contradictory things. I will tell you upon what I base my theory of the second marriage, aside from this banker's order, which is proof enough of itself, being dated long after my mother died.

“When we first went to Ceylon, my father procured a nurse for me, who was very faithful and devoted. I can remember that she was young and pretty, and that I wondered at her brown skin; she used to sing curious, sweet bits of song, which I did not understand, and coo and chatter to me, in a strange language. I was very fond of her. I distinctly recall how jealous I was when there was another baby in the house—Annee's own baby—which was so little, and of which she seemed more fond than of me.

“This girl was a native. I do not know what her name was. My father called her Annie, which she pronounced ‘Annee,’ and I did the same. After a time, she and her baby went away. My father told me that they had sailed far away; but that, before long, we would go after them, and find them, and live with them again. This consoled me somewhat in my bitter grief. For a long time I teased him to take me to Annee; but he never did, and as I grew into boyhood, her memory faded; I became engrossed in other interests, until beautiful, brown, laughing Annee was no more to me than a dream. You do certainly resemble her, Tangee, as her image is impressed upon my memory.”

“And you think I am that baby?”

“Yes. And now I understand your peculiar name. In trying to say Annee, your baby-tongue twisted it into Tangee.”

“It may be. But how singular that your father should never speak of his second marriage, never try to ascertain the fate of his wife and child! I do not understand it.”

“Neither do I. There are many things which require to be explained. But, my dear sister, these papers bring conviction to my mind. For all particulars we must wait until a personal interview can be had with my father. If I do not receive letters that he is on his way, I shall start immediately

for Ceylon, taking you with me. You will not refuse to go, Tangee?"

She thought of Arthur Wade. He had gone away. She did not know that she should ever see him again, much less did she know that he cared any further for her than to while away a few idle days in her company. Doubtless he scorned her origin, and had already forgotten her. Yet, should she really be the daughter of the East India merchant, she would be his equal in birth, and more than his equal in fortune. It might be that under such circumstances he would have something to say which she would like to hear!

But, would she accept his love on such terms? If he scorned her, being old Joe's protégé, would he truly love her, being his equal in rank? No! her pride rebelled. Ah, if it were only jealousy—maddening jealousy—which had driven him away! If, learning the relationship she held to Oliver, he should rush to throw himself at her feet! She blushed with joy at the thrilling fancy. Yet, again, how would he ever learn it? Ah! if he really loved her, he could *not* stay away. He would return, if only to feed on the sweetness of despair!

"You do not say, sister, whether you will accompany me?"

"Would it not be more prudent for me to wait until you see Mr. Gifford, ascertain the facts, and find whether, even if I be his daughter, he wishes to acknowledge me?"

"He will have to do that! I will submit to nothing less!" cried the young man, fiercely. "I'm your brother, and shall protect your rights. No, no, sister, this unknown father of yours is stubborn and peculiar, but he is honorable. I do not believe that he wronged poor, loving Annee; he calls her his wife on that paper. That his heart will leap with joy to find that he has a sweet daughter to love him and cheer him in his old age, I am sure will be the case. I wish he would come over here! He is rich enough to retire from business, and I confess I love my native land better even than the spicy island where I was reared, with its cinnamon groves and balmy airs."

"Write to him, and ask him to do so," suggested his companion; then, the tears starting afresh, "my own dear old

father ! What will become of Joe, when he finds that he has lost me ?”

“ He shall not lose you, sister. We will build him a new edition of the Jolly Jack, make him comfortable in his old days, and come down here every summer, to spend two or three months with him.”

“ Shall we tell him, now, what we have discovered ?”

“ I believe not, until you come back from Mr. Wetmore’s. We may have the means of proving our assertions by that time. Run, Tangee, get his consent to your spending a week with Kate, for you will have none too much time to pack your flummeries for the visit, this afternoon, and there is a little tug going up early in the morning.”

CHAPTER IX.

ACT FOUR.

WHEN Oliver came into Mr. Wetmore’s parlor with Tangee on his arm, Kate turned very pale. For a moment she gazed almost coldly at the beautiful, brilliant face before her, glowing with a happy smile.

“ It is no wonder he loves her,” she thought, a spasm of jealousy contracting her heart ; “ how *very* beautiful she is, and so happy, because she believes *he loves her* ?” while Tangee, on her part, was smiling with a consciousness of the joyful news in store for this lovely woman who seemed to her so much more stately than herself, and of far superior beauty. Kate’s blue eyes and delicate bloom were like the picture of an angel to Tangee. In a moment Kate’s constrained manner vanished ; she caught Tangee’s hand and kissed her with tearful fondness.

“ I don’t wonder our Oliver loves you,” she whispered in her guest’s ear ; “ no one could help it, I think.”

“ He does have *some* affection for me,” was the arch reply “ but he loves blue eyes and golden hair a thousand times **more.**”

"Who told you so?" exclaimed Kate, too surprised at the gay manner with which Tangee admitted this to think of the shape her own words took.

"A little bird told me."

"You would like to go to your room. I will accompany you. Oliver, there's a letter from Ceylon, which papa brought up last night."

Kate tossed the letter to him, and went up-stairs with her visitor, leaving him at leisure to read it. He broke the seal impatiently; his fingers still trembled from having so lately touched Kate's; he was burning with anxiety to know if his father were coming to America. An exclamation of joy followed, as, glancing down the page, he saw that Mr. Gifford spoke of sailing in the next vessel, which would leave Ceylon only a fortnight later than the one which bore the message.

"I have made a great fortune; I am tired of business; I wish to go home, and visit my dear Alice's grave. More, I would like, when I die, to be buried by her side. I have left my affairs in such a shape that if, upon visiting my native country, I desire to remain there permanently, I can do so."

Thus said a portion of the missive. Oliver's heart beat high with joy; all things seemed working to his wish. Restless and eager, he watched for Kate's return. He had a message for her which he hoped would make her as happy as himself. He had noticed a certain languor in her air, a thinner outline of the fair cheek, which touched him with the knowledge that she was suffering.

Oh! the delight of restoring her to happiness!

Presently he heard her light tread in the hall. She came in alone, and to hide her embarrassment, to conceal the throbbing of her heart, to make him believe that she had conquered herself, she asked him, smilingly, keeping on the other side of the apartment:

"What is the news from Ceylon?"

"Good news, Katie! good news on every side! Oh! I am so full of gladness that I know not how to begin!" He came over as he spoke, and caught her hands. "Kate! Kate! I am free—free to love you as much as I please, which is more than I can tell, or you can guess!"

He seemed about to kiss her, to blind her with his blazing eyes.

"What do *you* mean, Oliver?" she asked, shrinking a little from him.

"That Tangee and I are sister and brother—real flesh-and-blood relatives—and that she is as happy about it as I! I will tell you all, Kate—I will convince you. But now I only want to know one thing—I only want to speak on one subject. There is nothing else on earth that can move me until I have an answer to that. Kate, my darling, do you love me? Will you be my wife?"

She hardly recognized Oliver in this impassioned, willful man, holding her hands in his firm grasp, and pouring upon her the tropic splendor of his love through his luminous eyes; but a strange pleasure thrilled her being; she lifted her face and said:

"Yes, Oliver—you know it is yes, to all you ask."

Then the kiss of betrothal was set upon her lips; their souls appeared to flow into one; each felt that they had gained a wonderful addition to their lives; their spirits were stirred to their innermost depths.

How different, as Oliver reflected, from the boyish affection with which he had once extended his protection to Tangee!

The lovers were alone for an hour. Half that time had passed before Kate thought to ask again the reason for Oliver and Tangee taking on the new relationship. He explained all, as we know it, and when Tangee came down from her chamber, Kate was prepared to receive her as a true sister. It was agreed, among the young people, not to tell Mr. Wetmore the story until Mr. Gifford's arrival to confirm it; for, as Tangee said:

"If it should still turn out that I am not Olla's sister, it will have done a good deed, that trunk will, in showing us each other's hearts. There is no reason, Olla, why you should not ask Mr. Wetmore for his daughter, the first hour you have an opportunity."

And Oliver did solicit that inestimable favor of the merchant, who granted it without any cruel displeasure, remarking, however, after he had said that he had no objections:

"But Kate told me you were engaged to that pretty brunette."

"Perhaps Kate was jealous," laughed the young lover, evasively.

Tangee's week was prolonged to a fortnight, in expectation of the ship which should bring Mr. Gifford. Ten days after the receipt of the letter, the vessel arrived, with her passenger. For once the treacherous sands of Barnegat let slip their prize.

Mr. Wetmore and Oliver, informed of Mr. Gifford's arrival in the lower bay, ran down in a tug and brought him up to the city, and out to the country-house in the afternoon train. He was introduced to Kate, and to "Miss Van Horn;" he did not notice the deep agitation of the latter, or, if he did, attributed it to girlish shyness. After a royal dinner, when the first enthusiasm of the arrival had a little subsided, Oliver was standing by his father's side, on the porch, the young ladies at the other end, plucking flowers, and laughing lightly.

"Two beautiful girls!" said Gifford, senior, with an admiring glance.

"Which style do you prefer, father?"

"Each is perfect in its way; it would be hard to decide but, if I am to credit the hints thrown out, you have made your selection."

"Yes, father, Kate Wetmore will soon be your daughter, I hope."

"A beautiful girl, in every way prepossessing. You have made a sensible choice. When I heard of my friend's daughter, I foresaw the result. But who is the other? Any relative?"

"I believe she is a relative of mine, father."

"A relative of yours? What, is she one of the Philadelphia Giffords? She does not look like them. How came she here?"

"Through a series of accidents, father. Nearly seventeen years ago, a ship was lost off the Jersey coast, and went down before even her name was known. This girl, then a babe of about eighteen months, was the sole survivor. She was taken from her dead mother's arms by a wrecker of the coast, who adopted her, and brought her up. By a singular coincidence,

the *Flying Cloud* was wrecked on the same beach, I was rescued by the same man, and thus made her acquaintance. I have good reason to suppose her a native of Ceylon, and that you know much about her, father."

While rapidly saying these things in a low voice, Oliver kept his eyes on his listener's face, which betrayed great agitation.

"Can it be?" murmured Mr. Gifford; "can it really be? How strange are the ways of Providence! Oliver, this news has unnerved me. Apologize to my friends by saying that I am not well, and, after a time, come to my room. I wish to know more."

The interview which followed was of deep interest to both; while those who awaited its results were scarcely less affected. Tangee could not bear the suspense, but shut herself in her room, to conceal how anxiously she awaited tidings.

The confession which Mr. Gifford, for the first time, made to Oliver, was this: In those first months in a foreign land, mourning the loss of his wife, and affected with an indescribable home-sickness and desolation, the soft pity, the guileless tenderness of the beautiful young native whom he had employed to care for his child, won upon him, and aroused in him a feeling of gratitude and affection. He saw that she was enamored of him; she was very kind to the little boy, and perfectly trustworthy; and in a season of peculiar gloom and illness, he was tempted to propose marriage to her. She was overjoyed at the prospect; they were legally united by a Catholic priest; but they had not been long married before he began to reflect that he had done wrong in giving his boy a mother, who, though beautiful and gentle, was a perfect child in her ignorance, and of alien blood and habits. He grew tired of the childish fondness so different from the noble, reasonable love of his Alice. As yet, none of his friends knew of his *mesalliance*. Such gentlemen friends as visited at his house, the European society of the place, never saw his wife; and he did not entertain ladies, being considered a widower.

After a little girl was born, he felt still more the wrong of bringing up his children, subject to the superstitions of a mother still affected by the religion and manners of her race.

He formed the plan of sending her to America, to be placed in the care of a lady in Philadelphia, a distant relative, who would have her instructed by masters, and her mind opened to the true influences of the Gospel. To this lady he wrote, confessing his marriage, and intrusting his wife to her care.

His intention was to go after her, at the end of two years, and then openly avow his marriage. Poor *Annee* was heart-broken at the idea of going away from him; but, with the submissive nature of her race, consented to it, and was somewhat comforted by his promise to follow her as soon as she had learned to read the English Bible, to believe it, and to write readable letters to him. In the fondness of her ignorance she resolved that it should not be long until she could do that—love would help her! and with many tears, she sailed for cold and dreary America, with only her child for a comfort to her poor, tired heart. How black and inhospitable the shores of that new world had proven! Alas! her only welcome was a grave! Mr. Gifford, receiving word from his lady relative of the non-arrival of the ship, and that a vessel had been wrecked at Barnegat, and every soul gone down, still continued to hope, for a long time, that tidings might be received. As years passed on he knew that *Annee* was lost, and thereafter said nothing of his secret marriage. Remorse for having sent her away often rendered him unhappy, although he had done it with the best intentions. The Philadelphia lady had instituted careful inquiries, and had been assured that the wreck left not a trace behind, and that no human being was saved from the ship.

Mr. Gifford did not need to wait for a visit to Barnegat, to behold with his own eyes the trunk and its contents; Oliver's description was sufficient.

"And now, father, are you glad to have found this daughter?"

"Yes, boy, I am glad. My heart yearns for her with a real joy. Go! find her and bring her to me. I can not sleep until I have claimed her, and heard her call me father!"

Oliver departed on his welcome errand. He was sent to Tangee's door, who came forth at his summons, trembling and looking frightened.

"Don't look so pale, sister. Father feels as if he had

discovered a gold mine, or some better thing. He admired you from the first glance, and is quite 'set up' to find that so much beauty belongs to him. He is waiting in a fever of impatience."

Tangee sank to sleep that night a happy child, conscious of home, friends, protection. Two shadows lay on the clear mirror of her soul. The fear that no attention on her part could help Hardy Joe from a feeling of loss and loneliness; and a wonder as to the indifference of Arthur Wade.

"It seems good to be in a civilized land once more," remarked Mr. Gifford, to his friend Wetmore, when he had been three or four days his visitor. "There is no domestic life like ours. I must buy a house and furnish it, and prepare to go housekeeping with my daughter. Just think, how fortunate for me, when my boy is about to abandon me, that I have found that sweet girl to care for me!"

"Look out, friend, or you will lose her, too; you can't expect to keep a woman like that very long; some youth will be after her."

"Whoever takes her must take me, too; or, rather, I will take them both. Do you know if there is a suitable house to be had, near your own, in the city. I would like the two families to be as near neighbors as possible."

"You can find one, no doubt, as property is constantly changing hands. Here comes Miss Tangee; we must ask her how she likes the idea of housekeeping."

"Oh, I shall like it better than any thing else; I understand it, too; for have I not kept the Jolly Jack? But, father, before any thing is said or done, let us all go down to Barnegat and visit my other dear father."

"We will charter a schooner, and all go together," cried Oliver.

There never was such a merry crew in the Jolly Jack before as gathered there when the grand company swooped down upon the old "cap'n" and took possession of him and his. Tangee cried as she clung about the wrinkled neck of the dear old fellow; but he bid her tears "avast!"

"Belay them crocodiles, Tangee! ye know yer as sot up as the gilt eagle to the top o' our mast, out thar. Don't mind Hardy Joe. There's as good fish in the sea as ever was

caught, and I may grab up another baby yit, to bring up for somebody else. No, no, little gal, I shan't never forsake the Jolly Jack while her timbers hold together; so don't gammon about that."

"Then we'll all have to come and board with you every summer," said Oliver. "You won't object to an upper cabin being added, and give us a few state-rooms, on the upper deck?"

"Don't know 'bout it," answered Joe, walking out to the front, and taking a reflective look at the Jolly Jack. "She's about the pink now; I shouldn't like to give her a top-heavy look."

"Then we shall have to put up two cottages, one on either side, and make them our place of summer resort. Depend upon it, you can't shake us off; we'll stick to you like barnacles."

The report that Hardy Joe's girl had found her true father, and that he was as rich as "all Califerney," flew up and down the beach, and Tangee's old associates began to gather about the cabin, until quite a crowd was collected there, the first evening of her arrival. The good news was announced to them in a neat speech by Oliver, which they answered with three hearty cheers. Mr. Gifford, senior, gave one and all the means of being happy for a week, and a grand "jollification" at the tavern was the result.

"We've had company since yer went off," said Hardy Joe to Tangee, when they chanced to be alone together.

"Who?"

"I reckon ye could guess if ye'd try hard. Mr. Wade was here last Tuesday. Didn't stay long, when he found ye was gone. I told him ye was down to the city, buyin' yer weddin' finery."

"Oh, father!" she could not help exclaiming.

"Sorry I didn't know how things was goin' to turn out. Ain't to blame, am I, fer not forecasting what was goin' to happen? Twarn't down in the almanac, and so I warn't prepared. Sorry, gal, fer I took a real shine to Arthur Wade. Keep yer eye out, and mebbe ye'll see his suicide in the papers; he looked fit to do some sech thing when he went off."

As the accommodations at Barnegat were certainly not of the best, the party of visitors, after two or three days, concluded to return. Tangee went with them; but she whispered to Hardy Joe that she would come back, alone, and spend some time with him, before cold weather.

"I owe you the lives of both my children," said Mr. Gifford, as he wrung the old fisherman's hand, at parting. "If there is any thing I can do for your comfort, any thing that money will buy, so long as you live you shall have it."

"Money won't buy that sort o' thing," replied Joe, jerking his thumb toward Tangee. "If she'll only come to see the old chap once an' awhile, 'twill be all right. A keg o' apple-brandy and plenty o' pipes and 'backer, is all I needs, while the ship holds out."

"How would you like a trim, handsome little sailing-vessel, all your own?"

For a moment the wrecker's eyes brightened; then he shook his head.

"Ten year ago, 'twould a-been the pride o' my life; but I'm too old now; 'tain't worth while. A new fishin'-boat, though, mine's gittin' rather leaky, and a net."

"You shall have them by the next vessel coming down. Take good care of yourself, Joe, and God bless you."

"Lor!" said the wrecker, after they had departed, as, returning to his cabin, he found a little heap of gold pieces on the table; "shan't hev to wrack any this winter; don't care if thar ain't a ship goes to pieces. They're bright, these shiners; but they ain't so comfortin' as my little gal's smile, arter all."

It was now the season for the Wetmores to return to their town residence. Mr. Gifford purchased a handsome house, but two doors removed from theirs; and Tangee spent many days of pleasant excitement in selecting the furniture, and beginning her housekeeping. She had very little leisure in which to cherish melancholy, for, beside her own affairs, she was consulted by Kate, at every interview, about the bridal outfit, and all the details of the coming wedding.

As there seemed to be no good reason for delaying the marriage, Kate had consented that it should take place late in the

autumn. As Tangee was to be bride's maid, there was much shopping to be done together; the days fled so rapidly as to frighten the bride-expectant.

To Tangee they went not quite so swiftly. In the midst of her unbounded prosperity, she felt a vain and ceaseless repining to behold again that face which had first appeared to her like a vision beaming upon her out of the splendor of an ocean sunset. If she walked the street, any form or step which reminded her of him sent the blood rushing to her cheek; at every opera or concert, she scanned the crowd, hoping to see his face. She became addicted, even, to reading the advertisements, and the "personals," with the idea that she might chance upon his name. Yet she never saw nor heard of him; he had vanished completely from her sphere.

Despite the press of interesting business on hand, Tangee would go away in October, to pay a visit to her old home. In the midst of her new luxuries she pined for the sea, for a sight of Joe's storm-beaten face, for her little bed in the "crib," perhaps to sit where she sat when her knight came out of the sunset, murmuring—

"She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot."

living over again, in fancy, the scene of that summer evening.

"I know'd ye'd a true heart, and would be back to see yer daddy," was old Joe's welcome.

The neighbors came for a peep at the heiress, to find how much she had changed, and if she was "set up" beyond their endurance; but, as she was as kind and pleasant as ever, they had no complaints to make.

Lastly came Will Williams, home from his long whaling cruise.

"So Gifford turned out to be yer brother, arter all? Wal, it don't make much difference to me, since you've got so much above me, anyhow. I cum home with five hundred dollars wages, ready to set up housekeepin'; I didn't know but I might catch yer, arter all, Tangee; but it's no use. I was so mad, when I heard the news, I went right off and asked Sally if she'd have me?"

"I hope she said yes."

"I reckon, and right glad o' the chance, She'll make a smart wife ; but I shall never love her as I did you," with a sigh.

"Oh yes, you will, in time. She's pretty and industrious. When is the wedding to take place?"

"Next month."

"You tell Sally I wish the pleasure of giving her the wedding-dress. Do you like blue or pink, Will?"

"Pink suits Sally best, to my taste."

"Pink, then, it shall be, with a wreath for her hair, and a pair of slippers ; and now let us be good friends, Will. What do you say?"

CHAPTER X.

THE FIFTH ACT.

It was one of those October days when, although the sky is clear, the wind blows steadily, and there is a chilliness through the sunshine. The white caps were rolling in merrily upon the beach. The roar of the surf was louder than ordinary, drowning out all lesser sounds. It was a day such as Tangee loved ; she longed to dare the billows, at least to walk in the wet sand and receive the baptism of the salt spray. Going to her little chamber, she dressed herself in an old merino frock, which she had worn in her school days, and tying her hat closely, set out for a bracing ramble. There was nothing in all the magnificence of city life which suited her so thoroughly as this.

By some hidden impulse she took the direction of the clump of bushes and bit of wreck where she had sat when she first saw her knight. It was a long walk, and when she reached the spot she found that the wind had driven the water almost over it ; the foam was curling around it, so that she had to wade ankle-deep to reach her little seat ; but when she was once enthroned upon it, she felt like a queen surveying her realm. The breeze was never too cold for her ; it only brought

a richer color into her cheeks, and she loved its rude fingers in her hair, blowing it about her saucily. Her hands and face tingled with the spray which ever and anon showered them.

With the crimson folds of her dress clinging to the piece of wreck, and the white foam curdling about her, one, at a distance, might have mistaken the bit of brilliant color for a bird dipping to its ocean bath. The thunder of the surf affected her more deeply than any strain of music. It seemed speaking, in a mighty voice, strange and solemn secrets of nature and space, too vast for mortal comprehension.

A long time she sat and listened. Suddenly, some one spoke, close at hand. She had been conscious of no approach, had felt herself as isolated as Crusoe on his island, until the voice asked :

“Will you share your seat with me, or must I keep my distance?”

Arthur Wade! She turned to find him, with a fishing-rod in his hand, knee-deep in the water, standing by her side.

For a moment she was silent; her heart was in her throat; she could not have spoken had she tried, and all answer escaped her; it seemed to her those eyes must have pierced through and seen that she was thinking of him, longing for him, in that hour of self-communion.

“Are you, then, really only a myth, that you always rise up out of the sea to startle me?” she said, when she got breath.

“I am flesh-and-blood enough to feel the need of resting, after tramping several hours. I walked over from the village.”

“Then take a seat; I will not deny it to you. You do not tell me that you expect to fish, in the present state of the waters?”

“Well I am hardly so fresh as that, though Joe acknowledges that I want seasoning. I had my rod with me, and couldn't afford to throw it away.”

“Did you stop at the cabin?”

“No. I had not the slightest idea that you were still on the beach. I supposed you were married, and transformed from a mermaid into a city fashionable before this. Yet here you are, drenched and drabbled as usual.”

Her eyes sank before the glance which he gave at her wet locks, her glowing face, her clinging garments—a glance full of fire, yet repressed.

“Have you been at Long Branch all this time?”

“Oh, no! I have been hard at work these six weeks. I do not know what brought me to Barnegat; I had infinite difficulty in getting here; I have walked sixteen miles to-day, and I had nothing to expect when I got here, except to come to this spot, and find if old father ocean was the same as ever.”

“There is nothing else will take the place of his friendship,” said Tangee. “I, too, have been in the city six weeks; but it is a good place to lose your acquaintances in; you might as well be in Asia.”

“Then you are married, I suppose?”

Tangee glanced up at him beneath her long, black lashes; his lips were pressed together and his brow contracted; he was glowering savagely at the sea, as if that were to blame for the matter. A little smile crept out about her mouth, as she withdrew her eyes.

“No, Mr. Wade, I’m not married.”

“What’s the reason you are not?” he cried, turning sharply toward her.

“Am I obliged to give a reason, I should like to inquire?”

“Yes, you are! How dare you sit here beside me, in the very presence of nature, with her ear bent to listen, and trifle with me?”

Mr. Wade was growing dangerous; but, somehow, the girl was not afraid of him.

“If I had known nature had appointed you my father-confessor I might be induced to give you my reason. I take it to be that the right person has not asked me, and how could I marry without?”

“Tangee, what are you thinking about? What has become of that dark-eyed gentleman who came after you in August? Old Joe himself told me that you were purchasing ‘wedding finery’ when I was here last.”

“So I was—for a friend of mine.”

“But, Mr. Gifford?”

“Will be married to a merchant’s daughter, in just three

weeks from to-day. He is engaged to Miss Kate Wetmore, of New York, and I am to be bride's-maid."

He caught her hands, holding them so tightly that she gave up the effort to withdraw them; she tried to return his gaze but her eyes fell.

"What would you do if the right man should ask you?"

"Say 'yes!' when I had been coaxed enough."

"You like, then, to be coaxed?"

"I consider myself of some consequence,"—she hardly knew what answers she made, in her growing embarrassment, for she began to feel, now, what was coming, and to tremble before it, as the sea before the wind.

"There is nothing on earth I like so well as coaxing. Tangee! Tangee, my sweet, my darling, will you be mine! Tangee, my beautiful, my wild-bird, my pearl of the sea, say that you will! that you love me as I do you! that you have pined for me as I have for you! that you will let me tell my love, let me call you my own!"

"You are speaking with too much levity!" she said, struggling to release the hands which he covered with kisses. "I will not listen to you."

"No, Tangee, you mistake. Never was a man so much in earnest as I. I love you. I have loved you from that first night. You are the sweetest, strangest, wildest, most beautiful and loveable woman that was ever made."

"I did not say I liked flattery."

"Oh, but to coax you, my darling, is so sweet a privilege!"

He drew her to his side, raised her blushing face and looked into her eyes.

"Tangee, I am too much in earnest to coax you any more. I can not wait for my answer. What shall it be?"

"Nothing very severe, Mr. Wade."

"Will you marry *me*?"

"If you really wish it. But, Mr. Wade, your sphere of life has not been mine. It will be mortifying for you to take a wife in my circumstances. My relations with Hardy Joe will annoy you. Although I have some education, there must be many things about me which would annoy your fastidious taste. Your relatives would cry out. Reflect upon these

things, Mr. Wade. I lo—think too much of you to consent to see you mismated.”

“Mismated! with a child of Paradise! Tangee, I care not what your associations have been. I have thought it all over. I did not hesitate five minutes on account of them. You are beautiful and excellent—too good for me. If you came barefooted, like the beggar-girl before the king, I would come down to take you by the hand. But, I am not a king. My fortune is very moderate, my family is a good one; birth and education we all have, but not wealth. It may be that some of my friends will blame me for not bolstering up our sinking fortunes with a rich wife. But, that is not my way of thinking. When I am drawn, by every fiber of my being, as I am to you, I know that God and Nature have made the selection for me.”

“If that is the true impulse of your heart, and you are able to abide by it, I am willing to promise to be your wife, Arthur, for I love you—*love* you!”

Hand in hand, and side by side, they sat silent a long time. The thunderous anthem of the ocean was none too full and deep for their joy.

“Let us go home and tell father,” said Tangee, as it began to grow twilight. “You are a great favorite of his; he will be glad of this.”

They walked back, slowly.

“I’m a pretty sight,” said Tangee, as they drew near home, looking down at her drabbed garments; “if any of your friends were to see me now!”

“You look better to me than you would in satins and laces, truly. I first saw you by the sea; and its touch, though rude, seems to make you sweeter and dearer. I mean to be married on the beach.”

“Ah! do you?”

“Yes. You can wear the white dress I first saw you in.”

Tangee laughed, and ran in first. Old Joe was taking his supper, and she whispered in his ear:

“Here’s Mr. Wade. Don’t tell him a word about my relatives or my fortune, just yet, father, please. I wish to surprise him.”

When Tangee returned to New York, Mr. Wade bore her

company. The first week of their betrothal was spent at the beach ; but Kate's call for help hurried her home.

"Come to Mr. Wetmore's to-night, Arthur," Tangee said, as they parted on the street ; "I shall tell Kate that I have selected you for groomsman, and she will wish to be introduced to you."

Mr. Wade did as he was bade ; and was introduced to a home far more luxurious than his own, and to a fair and stately girl who begged the favor of his assistance at her approaching nuptials ; to Oliver Gifford, no longer his rival ; to Mr. Gifford, senior, a good old East Indian merchant-prince ; and, lastly, to Miss GIFFORD, a blushing, laughing, beautiful girl, with whom, to his amazement, he found himself well acquainted, though not by that name."

"Are you sorry I have changed my name ?"

"Not if getting in the habit of it will make it easy for you to change it again."

There was a laugh then, and Mr. Gifford said he should have to be consulted before any such step as that was taken. He was consulted, and made no serious objections.

At the good church-wedding which took place early in November, it would be difficult to say whether the bride or her first-assistant received the most admiration from observers. Both were beautiful enough to make people feel happy all day, who had the privilege of seeing them

THE END.

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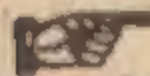
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